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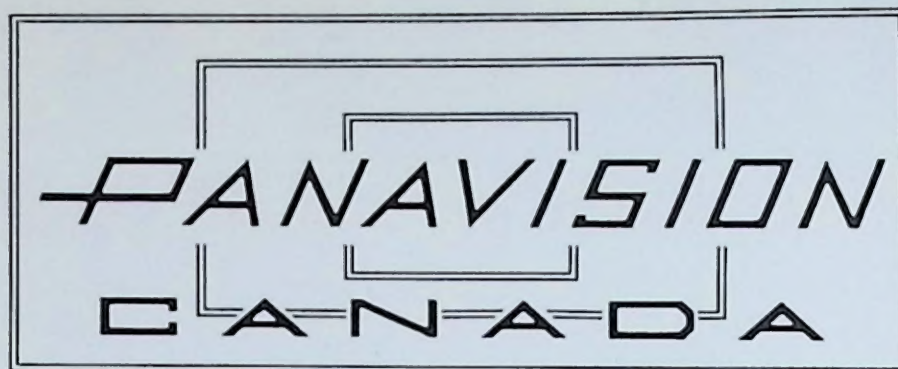
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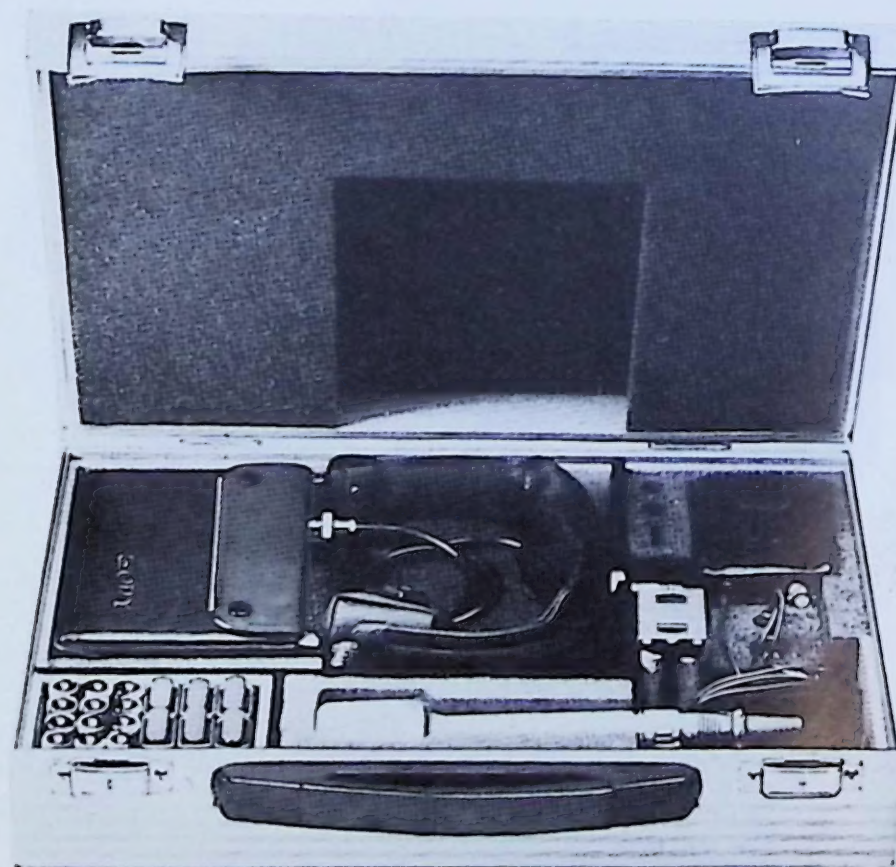
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Broadcast Fund policies presented to producers for comment

MONTREAL — At meetings in Montreal and Toronto with members of the Canadian production community, held May 16 and May 18 respectively, the Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC) presented its draft policies on the management of the \$35 million Broadcast Program Development Fund, announced as part of Communications minister Francis Fox's National Broadcast Strategy.

In an accompanying letter, CFDC executive director André Lamy called for written comments on the proposed management policies. "As the fund begins operation July 1, 1983, it is essential that management policies be finalized prior to that date," Lamy commented.

The 15-page draft quotes extensively from the Feb. 21 Memorandum of Understanding between the minister of Communications and the CFDC for its definition of the purposes of the fund which will apply to television programming in drama, children's programming and variety.

One-third of the fund will be spent on French-language television programming and 2/3 in English-language programming. Half of the money from the fund shall be applied to productions to be exhibited by private over-the-air broadcasters in Canada and up to one-half for productions to be exhibited by the CBC.

Though the fund "recognizes the desirability" of a single-definition of Canadian content, applicable to that of the CRTC or the CCA, "the Fund is autono-

mous in its decisions, including decisions on Canadian content."

Although the CCA requires that one of the two highest-paid performers be Canadian, the Fund would entertain projects for two years using Canadians or landed immigrants in only two of the four highest-paid performer positions, to allow producers the "leadtime to adjust programming schedules."

Production companies eligible to apply to the fund must be under Canadian control "and the producer shall obtain a licensing agreement from a Canadian television broadcaster before the Fund will consider an application."

The Fund will consider projects qualifying under Canada's existing co-production treaties, as well as future co-production agreements.

The eligible producer must demonstrate to the Fund's satisfaction his or her capacity to financially sustain the production; the broadcaster shall be contractually bound to the producer with respect to financial participation and intended time or date of broadcast; and the financial consideration paid by the broadcaster shall be to the Fund's satisfaction.

Acceptable projects will be "of high quality, attractive to peak viewing audience and where appropriate internationally attractive."

The fund can participate financially through 1) equity, (the Fund may require producer's financial participation) 2) a guaranteed loan, (contract pro-

(Cont. on p. 7)

MONTREAL — Reactions to the CFDC's proposed management policies for the Canadian broadcast program development fund run the gamut from relatively negative in Montreal, increasingly positive in Toronto to distantly hopeful in Alberta. In many cases many of the consulted parties have gone into a week of executive meetings to prepare detailed responses as well as criticisms of the draft policies.

"My reaction is one of disappointment and alarm," said Paul Siren of the Federation of Canadian Guilds and Unions in Film and Television, speaking of the consultative meeting in Toronto May 18.

"At the meeting in Montreal, May 16, I thought I would see an explosion of joy," Nicole M. Boisvert, president of the 51-member Association des producteurs de films du Québec (APFQ), told Cinema Canada. "This was going to be the end of the tunnel. Instead it was a funeral — the burial of the independent producer in this country."

Siren, reporting to the Federation's national executive on May 28-29, said the federation would subsequently call a press-conference to make public its objections to the proposed management policies. Siren said the Canadian content policies "reverse all the practices and immigration policies established with respect to the use of on-camera Canadian talent."

"The policies suggest that Canadian production will be primarily co-productions with American producers for American channels. This is not to purpose of the cultural measures proposed by the minister (of Communications)."

There was "no debate, no discussion" Siren said, at the Toronto meeting which drew an overflow crowd of some 40-

50 people from the production community.

After a week of consultation, Boisvert found that the Quebec-based APFQ's reaction to the proposed policies "exactly matched Toronto reactions."

"I want this fund to work," Boisvert told Cinema Canada, "and I hate being negative. So we're working out a very detailed response to the policies. I have some 50 questions I'd like to get cleared up and, as you know, people at the CFDC aren't exactly easy to reach. Until we have those answers, I can only respond to the policies with a lot of reservations."

"Broadly speaking, the policies put the independent producer entirely at the mercy of CBC/Radio-Canada and the CFDC. Now the CFDC only contributes one-third of the production money, and the producer two-thirds, so how is it that the CFDC gets to define all the terms? It's worrisome, to put it mildly."

"Secondly, there's a tremendous intrusion by the state on the level of scenarization and contracts. The policies speak of a CFDC contract between itself and the independent producer. Well, we'd like to see that contract; we don't even know any of the terms. And we're expected to provide two-thirds of the money."

"As well, the CFDC is granted what amounts to censorship powers on the level of the script. There are fundamental liberties at issue here: what about the freedom to create?"

"Who is going to be in charge of the fund? There's going to have to be a specific person and it makes a big difference who that person will be. Also we wouldn't like the CFDC to hire on a lot of people to administer the fund and have it melt away under the weight of its administration. These are just

some of the questions we'd like clarified.

"It seems clear that according to the policies it's the broadcasters who become the big bosses. The independent producer is reduced to being a go-between who'll only produce what is acceptable to the broadcasters. And even there, political decisions were taken to exclude the provincial-owned broadcasters from the fund: for francophone producers the lack of access to Radio-Québec and TVOntario makes a considerable difference in terms of market."

"None of this makes life any easier for us. There's a war of exclusion going on between the CBC and pay-TV. We now have to choose either one or another. What sort of progress is this for the independent producer? It does nothing to increase our domestic market — and that's the rationale behind all this. We were always told that these measures would enlarge the domestic market by 15-20%. They don't."

"Our greatest preoccupation is the lack of overall vision. In order to respond properly to these initiatives, it would have helped to know what's in the Cohen distribution report, or in the film policy. But we don't have them."

"This sort of project-by-project approach has got to cease," Boisvert concluded.

In Toronto, the Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA) has called a meeting of its members to pool reactions to the proposed policies.

"I think basically the policies are heading in the right direction," Michael MacMillan of Atlantis Films told Cinema Canada. "The draft suggests flexibility and Andre Lamy said there would be a flexible approach. I think that's the right approach."

(Cont. on p. 7)

First Choice falters, UK fund

MONTREAL — At presstime Cinema Canada learned that First Choice will freeze some \$7 mln. in contracts for Canadian shows planned for this year.

The 25% shortfall means an estimated \$21 million will be spent on Canadian content in 1983, \$7 million lower than the \$28 million originally planned.

The freeze is due to diminished numbers of paying subscribers — an estimated 400,000 by end '83 instead of an initial estimate of 600,000.

First Choice, with monthly revenues of \$2.5 million, has spent \$19 million in capital and is relying on credit to keep up its cash flow.

A \$50 million private pay cable production fund, being pursued by British financier and program packer Kent Walwin of Yellowbill offered to discount First Choice's equity in return

for a 20% participation from First Choice in the fund, according to trade sources.

Walwin is reported as saying that First Choice executives Victor Mashaal and senior programs Phyllis Switzer and Riff Markowitz generally support the fund.

The fund would produce "cheap" U.S. programming that would qualify as Canadian content or would be tailored to qualify under the official Canada-UK co-production treaty which is under negotiation for amendment to include television production. The fund would derive 20% of its money from Walwin's Yellowbill interim-finance company, already backing at least two Montreal productions, 20% from First Choice, 40% from a U.S. pay cable outfit, and 20% from other foreign sources.

Cineplex registers profit despite Major trouble

TORONTO — Cineplex Corp. president Garth Drabinsky has announced that the company reported a profit before extraordinary items of \$50,473 on revenues of \$7.02 million in its first quarter ending March 31, the organization's first quarterly profit since its formation as an integrated company.

In addition, a special gain from recovery of income taxes due to previous losses raised net income to \$103,973.

Drabinsky credited sales by the Pan Canadian distribution division of the company to pay-TV and entry into the video cassette wholesale business for

the revenue gains. The company's guaranteed sales to pay-TV total nearly \$5.8 million, while first quarter sales of video cassettes brought in \$440,000.

Cineplex, in the 11 months ending Dec. 31, 1982, lost \$15.5 million, or \$3.09 per share, on revenues of \$20.3 million and a \$24.6 million deficit.

The company's working capital deficit is now \$947,142, down from \$3.4 million last June. In its first quarter, Cineplex paid down \$913,301 of its long-term debt, which stood at \$13.8 million on Dec. 31.

Cost-cutting moves have also

reduced projected expenses by \$3 million.

Drabinsky blamed high interest rates and the "anti-competitive nature" of film distribution in Canada as reasons for Cineplex's poor financial showing in 1982. A ruling by the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission, based on an application filed by the director of investigation and research under the Combines Investigation Act, is scheduled for June 8. Latest reports at presstime have it that a first-run deal has been struck with the Majors, subject to the adjournment of the commission hearings.

No. 97 - June 1983

Cover: Summer is the time for blockbuster movies and so Cinema Canada fittingly celebrates summer with feature articles on some uniquely Canadian blockbuster filmmakers: Gilles Carle and David Cronenberg, beginning page 15. Over the years, Lois Siegel has been a faithful contributor to Cinema Canada with her many photos and articles on filmmakers and filmmaking. For the past four years, she has been working on her no-budget feature, *A 20th Century Chocolate Cake*, which had its premiere in Montreal June 1. Our cover by graphic artist Richard Vincent is a tribute to her and other young filmmakers who, with perseverance, imagination and originality, continue to strive for new filmmaking recipes.

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Prévost president of CFDC

MONTREAL — Ed Prévost, president of the Quebec division of La Brasserie O'Keefe Ltée in Montreal, has been appointed president of the Canadian Film Development Corporation. The announcement was made Apr. 22 by the minister of Communications, Francis Fox.

Until September 1982, Prévost had been president and chairman of the board of La Corporation Civitas Ltée, a Montreal company owned by the Crépault family which had extended holdings in broadcasting and film in Quebec, and which had bought and then sold several radio stations in Ontario.

Civitas' film division, La Corporation des Films Mutuels, was headed by Pierre David, and was involved in both distribution (as Films Mutuels in Quebec and as 50% partner of New World-Mutual in English Canada) and in production.

From 1968 to 1977, six films produced by Les Productions Mutuelles received \$1,341,759 in equity investment from the

CFDC. Nine subsequent films, produced by Mutuelles in conjunction with Victor Solnicki under the corporate entity of Filmplan International all received interim financing from the CFDC. Those films were *Hog Wild*, *Dirty Tricks*, *Models*, *Scanners*, *Gas*, *Videodrome*, *Visiting Hours*, *The Brood* and *The Funny Farm*. Two more recent films produced by Mutuelles — *Of Unknown Origin* and *For Those I Loved* — also received interim help from the CFDC.

Following the departure of both David and Prévost from Civitas, the company sold its distribution division to René Malo and has no more production plans.

Bionic cop

TORONTO — First Choice has licensed *Inspector Gadget*, a half-hour animated family series being co-produced by Toronto's Nelvana Ltd. and DIC Enterprises of France.

Report suggest new scheme for CRTC

OTTAWA — The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) should replace its Canadian program definition and its co-production definition with a system that would allow "the creation and development of a variety of acceptable Canadian program definitions, relying on a separate combination of cultural and industrial Canadian program components but all requiring the financial, management and creative control by Canadians of the production process."

Such is the principal conclusion of a 59-page report prepared by Toronto lawyer Douglas Barrett for the Canadian Conference of the Arts.

Entitled "Pay TV and the Regulatory Requirements of the CRTC," the report, released in mid-May, is predominantly an analysis of the "teething problems" resulting from ambiguities in the regulatory environment stemming from the CRTC's March 1982 pay televi-

sion decision. The report notes that "the Commission was under tremendous pressure from the cable industry, from the government and... from the Canadian public to proceed quickly... Instead of holding public hearings to consider a draft pay television regulatory policy... it held the initial policy hearing and the licensing hearing at the same time and then invented the regulatory environment" (original emphasis).

The report identifies three regulatory objectives established by the Commission: 1. the development of a distinctive pay-television system 2. the generation of new, high quality and diverse Canadian programming and 3. the expansion of the independent program production industry in Canada.

While the report finds "an increase in production activity," it also found "several major obstacles" to the realization of the CRTC's objectives.

Primarily, the report notes, "much of the Canadian production generated by pay-television not only seems designed to be perceived... as American programming but is... largely produced under arrangements with American producers in which financial and creative control... is held by non-Canadians," with the exception of C Channel, the report notes, whose service is "distinctively Canadian."

While the CRTC as a condition of license in its pay-TV decision established conditions (eg., percentage of investment in the acquisition of Canadian programs) that must be met year-by-year, "no regulatory mechanism is in place which would permit it effectively to enforce conditions of licence." The report suggests the establishment of "a special pay

television annual return form" for each license year, detailing the extent to which conditions of licensing have been met, as well as public hearings in consideration thereof.

The report finds that a second "major ambiguity" in the CRTC decision has permitted the practice known as scaffolding, a practice which the report identifies as having "significant potential damage." By specifying in a public notice that the percentage of revenues expended on Canadian programs "may not be diluted by revenues from other sources," the report suggests that CRTC could put an end to a practice that "completely contravenes the spirit" of the pay-TV decision.

Thirdly, the report reviews both the CRTC's Canadian program certification process as well as that of the DOC's and in both procedures finds "it is almost impossible, to describe the minimum cultural component requirements for Canadian programming." The report suggests a multiple definition of Canadian program content which would allow combinations of Canadian cultural and industrial program components.

Such a system, the Barrett report concedes, "would be complex to develop and administer," but notes that if taken seriously the achievement of the type of cultural objectives intended by the CRTC in its pay-TV decision "is always a complex matter."

The report concludes with the hope that "this report will encourage the Commission to take the necessary compensatory steps so as to ensure the fulfillment of the spirit of its Pay Television Decision and the achievement of the regulatory objectives set out in it."

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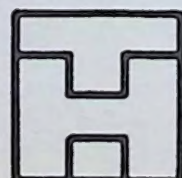
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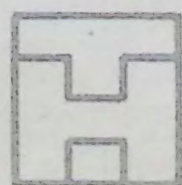
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DOC-CRTC move closer on CanContent

OTTAWA — The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's tightening of Canadian content regulations for television programming (see CineMag, Cinema Canada No. 96) has had an overflow impact upon the department of Communications' Canadian Film Certification Office, which officially certifies the Canadian-ness of film and videotape for the purposes of the capital cost allowance.

"We're interested in a similar tightening," the CFVCO's Robin Jackson told Cinema Canada. "We thought the CRTC's was a good move."

Among the possible areas to be tightened, Jackson said, the Certification Office would look at "making the feature performer in variety programs a Canadian," as well as "the feasibility

of a points system for shorts."

In the regulatory crossover, the CRTC's tightening of Canadian content would move more towards the point-system used by the DOC in determining Canadian certification.

"But", cautioned Jackson, "we're not as flexible as the CRTC," adding that the Certification Office's own tightening of content regulations would not become effective until early 1984.

"We have to decide exactly what we're going to do, then we have to have the approval of the departments of Finance and Revenue; after which it has to go through the department of Justice and the Privy Council Office; after that, it has to be gazetted. It's a very time-consuming process."

Louisiana awash in co-production

MONTREAL – French director Jacques Demy (*Peau d'âne*, *Model Shop*) has withdrawn from the I.C.C./Gaumont/Antenne 2 co-production of the ante-bellum epic *Louisiana*, currently in its sixth week on location in St. Francisville, Louisiana. Demy, who withdrew for "personal and family reasons," according to executive producer Denis Héroux, has been replaced by Philippe de Broca (*L'homme de Rio*, *L'incorrigible*, *Julie pot-de-colle*).

"Philippe de Broca became available, and wanted to work with us," Héroux told Cinema Canada. "And as he was one of the original candidates I'd had in mind for the position of director on *Louisiana*, we are very happy that it's worked out so well. We're very pleased with the results; the crew is tremendously enthused, and he's a very dynamic guy. We're going to get a good film out of it."

The *Louisiana* shoot is becoming something of a *cause célèbre* in Canadian film circles. The production has applied for treaty co-production status with majority (55%) Canadian financial participation, shooting 77 days in Louisiana and 13 in France. According to Pete Legault, co-production treaty administrator at the CFDC, *Louisiana* has been granted provisional co-production status. Because no shooting is planned in Canada and an original intention to shoot some interiors in a studio in Montreal has been abandoned, Canadian film unions are demanding that official co-production status be withheld. According to insider reports, Gaumont in France has twice been refused its co-production application as a result of pressures by the International Federation of Audiovisual Workers (FISTAV).

Film climate forces ACTRA into the nude

TORONTO – Extensive guidelines for performances requiring nudity have been distributed to all members of ACTRA (the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists) through the union's May newsletter.

The guidelines contain 16 requirements concerning auditions, contracts, and rehearsals and performances, and are described in the newsletter as "minimum conditions." By comparison, the guidelines concerning nude scenes in the current independent producer's agreement (Article A39) contain only three requirements.

The Independent Producers Agreement with ACTRA expired on Apr. 30, 1983, but ACTRA is continuing under the terms of the old agreement as negotiations proceed. According to ACTRA representative Stephen Waddell, ACTRA is attempting to negotiate its guidelines into the new independent producer's agreement.

The guidelines in the current agreement "are not sufficiently detailed to protect performers in (ACTRA's) opinion," said Waddell. The new guidelines are "very specific" on auditioning procedures, on how the nature of a nude performance must be detailed in a written contract between engager and performer, on the conditions in which nude scenes are shot, and on the manner in which the performer must be treated during the filming. The guidelines also list conditions on continuity photos, production stills, and doubling performers for nude scenes.

"The guidelines have become necessary as a result of the growing number of skin-flicks being produced in Canada for sale to pay-TV networks," said the newsletter. Waddell told

Cinema Canada there were "concerns" expressed by ACTRA members as to both the increased volume of productions requiring nudity being produced in Canada and to the potential for abuse involving such productions.

The ACTRA newsletter stated "the failure by the CRTC both to establish clear, reasonable Canadian content regulations and to enforce its own guidelines on 'sex-role stereotyping' and 'the increased production of pornographic films' as reasons for the current situation."

The next negotiating session between representatives of ACTRA and the independent producers is scheduled for June 2. According to Waddell, the producers have generally endorsed the guidelines but details must still be worked out.

Public ready for NFB by cable

OTTAWA – A national public opinion survey commissioned by the National Film Board of Canada shows that a wide majority of cabled Canadians would support a new Canadian cable-TV channel of children's programming in the daytime and information and documentary programs in the evening.

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents said they were interested in the service and 65 percent said they were ready to pay an additional 50 cents to \$2 in subscriber fees to get the service.

The results of the survey were revealed in Ottawa Apr. 28 in a speech by Film Commissioner James Domville before the House standing committee on Communications and Culture as part of the committee's ongoing hearings on the Applebaum-Hébert report.

In the speech Domville stated the Film Board's fundamental disagreements with the federal cultural policy review that recommends transforming the Board into an advanced film institute.

"Applebaum-Hébert," Domville said, "has fallen into the traditional trap of looking to American commercial models to achieve Canadian cultural purposes."

"I think it is time we stopped deluding ourselves that commercialization based on large-scale American models will result in distinctive, high quality Canadian programming."

As an example of such programming, Domville presented the Film Board's "new approach to television that would give the public real access to many of the high quality or minority interest Canadian films that cannot find their audience today."

Describing the NFB's satellite/

cable channel as "an interactive national electronic film library" Domville noted that such a alternative, distinctively Canadian channel was dependent upon the CRTC opening the door in a forthcoming decision on universal pay-TV and cable tiering.

Domville revealed the survey results as an indication that the public would want "such an alternative Canadian service."

The survey, conducted between Mar. 29 – Apr. 6, sampled 2000 respondents aged 18 and over in a national telephone poll.

Domville's speech was the second appearance in as many weeks by the NFB before the House committee.

Since Apr. 14, the committee has held hearings on the film and broadcasting chapters of Applebert. Beginning with the CBC, representatives of 16 organizations from the film and television industries as well as regulatory and funding agencies have appeared before the committee.

In response to Communications minister Francis Fox's request that the committee give priority to the film and broadcasting chapters, a subcommittee began drafting, when hearings ended May 12, an interim report for presentation to the House of Commons at the end of the month or early in June, to coincide with the release of Fox's new federal film policy.

The House committee's Applebert hearings began Mar. 14 with the appearance of Messrs. Applebaum and Hébert. Committee clerk Richard Dupuis told Cinema Canada that hearings on the other chapters of the federal cultural policy review would continue "probably until the autumn."



Don Evraire

(February 10, 1936 – May 4, 1983)

*He will be sadly missed
by his friends and colleagues
at Film Arts.*

Fund crucial to new generation of producers

(Cont. from p. 3)

"What's going to be tough is how the CFDC will walk the tightrope between a cultural and a industrial strategy. But it makes sense to tie cultural goals to industrial needs. The only way we'll build an industry is with a product that makes financial sense. Only one there's enough production happening on an on-going basis will there be product with recognizable Canadianess that gets watched. There's a certain critical mass of production that has to be reached first. And the fund'll help us get there."

MacMillan termed his reaction "about average", adding that "Within a week or so, we'll see what kind of consensus there is in response to the policies."

CFDC deputy director in Toronto Bob Linnell told Cinema Canada he thought the reaction to the consultative meeting was "fairly good. I've had a chance to talk to a number of people. There were a lot of questions, mainly trying to get more specifics."

Linnell emphasized the general and flexible nature of the guidelines: "The CFDC will be assessing each case on its own merits." He added that in the responses to the proposed policies "I haven't heard anything insurmountable of fundamental."

Basically the thing is a step is the right direction," independent producer Bill Macadam of Norfolk Communications in Toronto told Cinema Canada. "They are consulting with us, and they've got to keep consulting with us. What you're looking at here is a first draft, and I think they're well aware of that. My feeling is that it would be a great mistake to think that the fund is going to be a significant help. It's a step in the right direction but it isn't going to turn the industry around as it is structured. There are a lot of problems. The CFDC's got to be a party in this with us to make things work. They're open to suggestions and I hope they'll continue to be."

Macadam had a number of specific criticisms, many of which he raised at the Toronto meeting. These include the suggestion that the CRTC Canadian content definitions should apply to television programming, rather than CCA requirements; that beneficially-owned productions (i.e. co-productions) truly be beneficially owned, though he did not consider Canadian copyright to be an indispensable condition to producing Canadian television; that production companies should not be limited to applying to the Fund for project at a time though "a mechanism should be set up to ensure that there's no abuse by one company."

"For instance," Macadam said, "the policies talk of distribution guarantees. You don't get distribution guarantees in TV—that's a film term. You can, however, look at it in terms of pre-sale commitments. Obviously that's a problem."

"Why does the fund have an administrative fee if they're taking equity? That doesn't make much sense."

"But there's no doubt about it—the fund will help. The very big question here is that you've got to get a free-TV license. If you get next to nothing in licensing fees, the CFDC has got to make sure they're legitimate licensing fees. Secondly let's say you do get one-third out of a Canadian network, then you go to Europe and get another third, then you got to the fund for the remaining third. You're not really gaining ground unless the fund says they're in effect subsidising to one third. If it's only a loan, then the department of National Revenue's going to want a return; if it's equity, then equity's going to want a part of whatever fees the producer earns. If it's not financially viable for the producer, there'll never be an industry in this country."

These and other problems—such as the contribution of the CBC to independent production, or the "ludicrous situation" of asking producers to defer their fees—were among ones preoccupying Macadam.

"But everybody's working together to sort them out. (André) Lamy, (Pierre) Juneau and the pay-people are trying to address this problem. It's not a simple thing."

"The Toronto meeting involved a group of producers who've long since figured out what the fund is about," Roman Melnyk, CBC's director of independent production, told Cinema Canada. "The draft policies held no surprises. They were a strong reflection of the memorandum of agreement (between the DOC and the CFDC). I think it's very much straight ahead."

"We intend to benefit and plug into the fund. It's a grand opportunity for us to bring a lot of programming. I'm looking forward to sifting through proposals. The next step is to cope with the flood of proposals, and find out what the industry sees as viable propositions. All this now has to be translated into meaningful programming."

The degree of CBC independent production's financial participation "is still a matter of discussion," Melnyk added. "Part two of the broadcasting strategy (dealing with the CBC) is going to give some indications where the public broadcaster fits in overall."

Another perspective was offered by independent television producer Doug Hutton of Edmonton, who was not present

at the Toronto meeting.

"Everybody's getting on the bandwagon with this fund. I hope it creates much-needed programming. I hope it won't be all the good old boys who'll get all the funds again. I'm a great believer in all of us participating and I hope the fund'll be evenly and regionally distributed."

"But I'm not that optimistic. Pay-TV has not worked out and there have been severe cutbacks in program purchasing."

"We've got the hardware, we've got a good distribution system. All we have to do is get some quality programming together."

In the July CineMag, Cinema Canada will carry further responses to the CFDC's proposed program development fund management policies.

Policy spelled out

(Cont. from p. 3)

vided by the Fund) 3) a loan guarantee (with monthly fee) or 4) a combination of the three. An administration fee of not less than \$1000 will be charged by the fund on its financial participation.

In distribution and marketing, the fund will favor projects with a contract with a Canadian-controlled distributor or sales agent.

Nielsen sets sights on Quebec-Canada '95

TORONTO — Shooting began May 16 in Toronto on *Quebec/Canada 1995*, a political satire produced and written by Richard Nielsen starring John Neville, Jackie Burroughs, Martha Henry, Kenneth Welsh, Albert Millaire, and Louise Marleau.

The 90-minute comedy is being produced by Primedia Productions in association with First Choice and the CTV Network. The program has been licensed to both First Choice and CTV and is scheduled to be delivered to First Choice in August for a fall telecast, according to Nielsen.

The director is John McGreevy, who replaced Primedia's original choice Robin Phillips, who was busy with previous directing commitments as well as well as preparing for his new role as artistic director for the Grand Theatre in London, Ontario.

Recently, Primedia and the Grand Theatre announced a three-year deal giving the production company exclusive TV and film rights to three of the theatre's plays per season.

Three co-prod treaties ready

MONTREAL — Three co-production treaties between Canada and France have received provisional approval from both governments, and the first treaty, dealing with cinema, was officially signed May 31 in Montreal by Communications Minister Francis Fox at a public announcement made at the Maison Radio-Canada by Fox and French ambassador Jean Béliard in the presence of members of the Montreal film community.

The treaty covering television productions and a third dealing with special cultural projects should be signed this July.

Fox told Cinema Canada that the television treaty, a "first" of its kind, was his "personal initiative," and was prompted by remarks made several years earlier by France's Culture Minister Jack Lang. "There is a need to extend the space occupied by francophone production around the world, and this treaty should help to increase both the quantity and the quality of that production," Fox said.

Fox is especially pleased that the treaty includes provision for films made in English to be dubbed either in France or in Canada, depending upon the choice of the majority producer. Until now, the dubbing was obligatorily done in France.

ce, due to legislation which prohibited the screening of films dubbed in other countries.

Fox said that the treaty, coupled with the new Broadcasting Fund, to which all treaty productions will be eligible, nicely complements his new broadcasting strategy. "Soon we will resolve the question of the CBC and copyright, and the broadcasting aspect of our policies will be complete," he added.

In response to producers' questions concerning the Broadcasting Fund and the letter of agreement with a broadcaster which is a pre-requisite to access to the Fund, Fox said that he felt the initiative would remain with the producer. "I even expect that agreements will be made between producers, broadcasters and pay-TV networks; certainly there is nothing to keep the pay-TV operator from having first window for productions which come from the fund," he said, rectifying the impression that pay-TV licensees would be excluded from the Fund.

Fox concluded by saying that his film policy would not be ready until "late fall." Sources within the department of Communications report that work on the National Film Board chapter of the policy is responsible for the delay.



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Cinema Canada

Gorman takes on presidency of D G C in surprise quickie upset

TORONTO — In an unexpected development at the Directors' Guild of Canada annual general meeting May 1, George Gorman was elected the new president of the association, widely de-

feating rival candidate Larry Kent.

While the final tally was not made public, Kent, who had been running without opposition since the withdrawal of

Harvey Frost, suddenly found himself opposed by Gorman four days before the vote. The result, Kent told Cinema Canada, was "not close at all."

Gorman, 62, describes him-

self as "one of the older members of the Guild, having seen on one of the first executives." Explaining why he agreed to become a draft-candidate Gorman said, "There was a bit of a groundswell here not to have a president elected by acclamation or by default. It was a whirlwind four-day campaign.

"I thought it would be close," Gorman added, "I thought my opponent would have the edge. The results were quite astonishing."

Describing his administration as "one for the times", Gorman feels "there are a lot of people hoping that we can adjust a little bit and be a bit more flexible in a number of areas. When we look at contracts, we fit the contract to the job and vice-versa. I don't mean we should completely turn around and show a soft side that everybody can now take advantage of, but we should take each production or issue on its merits, rather than maintain a hard, steadfast line.

"But we're not going to be less nationalist. That's what we're here for. For the moment we need to protect our members and we'll do that, but within that context we'll make sure we're not being destructive in terms of the producers' ability to produce. After all we need each other — without

them, we don't work."

The main priorities, according to Gorman, are "more work", together with "an extended program for re-training" director members in the area of multicamera videotape production.

"I'd like to see us doing more for pay-TV," Gorman said, "I'd like to see us doing more TV series for the networks, I'd like to see us do more features, not necessarily big budget. As the recession is slowly beginning to fade, there are hopeful prospects for production."

A former senior producer/director with Crawley Films, Gorman came to Toronto in 1960 where he worked on a number of TV series (*Mounted Police*, *Forest Rangers* and *High Hopes*). In 1972 he went to Africa to make training films for a copper-mining company in Zambia, a time he remembers as "a great experience" unfortunately cut short by nationalization and illness.

"It's rather overwhelming," Gorman says of the current broadcasting environment. "I just boggle at what we're into and how we're going to sustain it on the plus side. It's a tremendous challenge to everyone, perhaps most of all to the government and the CRTC. Great mistakes have been made in the past."

ACTRA undergoes name change

TORONTO — The Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) is no more — at least in name only.

A meeting of the ACTRA membership May 6 voted by a margin of nearly 8-1 in favour of constitutional revisions in the organization, which include alterations in the organization's internal structure and a name change. While the ACTRA acronym will remain, the union will now be known as the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists.

Besides acknowledging the significant work of the ACTRA

membership in the Canadian film industry, the new name indicates the change among the craft sections of the organization from association to alliance. The alliance structure will allow each guild — the ACTRA Performers Guild, the ACTRA Writers Guild, and the Guild of Broadcast Journalists and Researchers — to be more distinct and self-governing in response to the specific needs of its members.

The changes were announced May 10 from the ACTRA offices in Toronto.

Cineplex cuts ticket to right price

TORONTO — Cineplex theatres in Toronto (excluding the International and Carlton Cinemas) began a new admission price policy on May 16, with prices for adult evening admissions dropping one dollar.

Cineplex cut its adult matinee prices to \$3.00 (from \$3.50) for Mon.-Tue. -Thur. -Fri. screenings, with evening prices for those days also slashed to \$4.00 (from \$5.00). Youth prices on these days are \$3.00 for matinees and \$3.50 for evening screenings.

Adult admission for all week-

end screenings was reduced to \$4.00 (from \$5.00). Youth prices are cut to \$3.50 for matinees and \$4.00 for evening shows.

In addition, Cineplex will continue its "Two Dollar Tuesdays" program, with all admissions for all shows priced at \$2.00.

MONTREAL — Montreal production company Filmline Productions Inc. is co-producing the \$3.5 million CBS made-for-TV feature *The Race To The North Pole* together with Robert Halmi Productions Inc. of New York City.



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Quebec unions to bury hatchet

MONTREAL — At a historic and animated general assembly May 15 the membership of Quebec's two film technician unions, the Association des professionnels du cinéma du Québec (APCQ) and the Syndicat National du Cinéma (SNC), agreed to hold a referendum within 30 days on the mechanism of reunification.

The 200-member APCQ was created in August 1976 following an ideological split from the SNC, the only film union at the time, which left it representing some 400 members. While reunification has repeatedly been discussed among members of the two unions, it is only recently that there has been substantive agreement.

The referendum, expected for June 15, will ask the union members three questions: to reply Yes or No to whether the unions should unify, whether to be affiliated to the Quebec union central, the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), and thirdly which of the two unions should be maintained as the 'pivot' for a new, reunited union. Final wording of the referendum questions is being prepared by a joint referendary committee. Results of the referendum will be binding on the members of both unions and will entail the dissolution of the union not designed as representative.

"This is a particularly historic occasion," SNC president Maurice Leblanc told Cinema Canada. "We're fed up with being played off one against the other. Reunification is something that technicians have been demanding for three years now, but

we were unable to overcome the technical problems. It's been a question of mechanisms all along and now that we have one, an irreversible step has been taken. This is the referendum that's going to solve all our problems."

A somewhat more cautious note was sounded by APCQ vice-president Larry Lynn.

"I'm relieved that we're finally getting together," he told Cinema Canada. "It's been pretty silly to have two associations representing the same jurisdictional area and it has certainly been counter-productive. Unfortunately there's been an ideological split. There are those that believe the technicians of Montreal can manage their own affairs and those that believe we need outside help from the CSN. This affiliation to a central union has been the only stumbling block to the unification of our two associations. APCQ members almost to a person are against joining a politically minded organization such as the CSN, and I think the referendum will show a majority of the technicians in Montreal don't want it either. I'm looking forward to a new era in Quebec film unions."

Whatever the decision by the members, Leblanc added, it will be a binding one.

"Within a month," Leblanc said, "the question of which union is to be the valid representative of Quebec film technicians and freelancers will be decided once and for all. And, who knows, this may even have an inspirational impact upon our colleagues in Toronto."

Kinetic reaches US through Buffalo

TORONTO — Canadian independent non-theatrical distributor Kinetic Films has doubled its sales to the U.S. market since opening a fully operational office in Buffalo, N.Y., earlier this year, according to Kinetic president Frances Broome.

The office, headed by Kinetic vice-president Gary Malloy, serves the entire U.S. non-theatrical (schools, libraries, universities, businesses, government agencies, etc.) market. The office has allowed Kinetic to avoid the time-consuming and often expensive process of clearing films through a broker at the border, and Broome says the company has selected only the most marketable of its Canadian titles — about 40 in total — for its U.S. catalogue.

"The primary concern of the office is selling Canadian films in the U.S.," says Broome. "It brings money back to Canada both ways — for the producer and for the distributor." She says filmmakers generally earn about 30 percent of gross sales,

paid in Canadian funds.

The company is classified as a foreign corporation doing business in the United States. "We let them (customers) know we are a Canadian company selling Canadian films," says Broome. "We're treated as something unique down there. We've had easy access to the marketplace."

Kotcheff via Orion

TORONTO — Orion Pictures has acquired the PolyGram Pictures production *Split Image*, directed by Canadian Ted Kotcheff, and Orion's Canadian office has released the picture in an exclusive Toronto run May 20 at the Cumberland Theatre. The film stars Michael O'Keefe, Karen Allen, Peter Fonda, and James Woods.

Kotcheff is currently preparing to direct the pay-TV version of Mordecai Richler's novel *Joshua Then and Now* for RSL Films this summer.

Distributors Spectrafilm - young and wealthy

TORONTO — Spectrafilm, a new Canadian-financed, independent distribution company which plans to release art and specialty films to both the Canadian and U.S. markets, was officially announced May 10 in Cannes.

The company is headed by president Bahman Farmanara, former director of Vancouver's International Children's Film Festival who moved to Canada from Iran two years ago, and by general manager Linda Beath, former director of United Artists Classics-Canada and manager of New Cinema Ltd. Farmanara will head the company's office in Toronto, which opened at temporary quarters in mid-April, while Beath will manage the company's New York office, scheduled to open June 1.

Spectrafilm plans to distribute 12 films per year and has already acquired nine titles, including the 1981 Canadian feature *The Wars*, produced by Nielsen-Ferns International and directed by Robin Phillips.

Other titles acquired include

Prénom : Carmen, directed by Jean-Luc Godard; Edward Bennett's *Ascendancy*; Manuel Gutierrez Aragon's *Demons in the Garden*; Robin Davis's *I Married a Shadow* (scheduled as the company's first release in New York in August); François Truffaut's *Vivement dimanche*; Alain Resnais's *La vie est un roman*; Bob Swaim's *La balance*; and Ann Hui's *The Boat People*.

The company also has letters of agreement for three more films but won't release the titles until the contracts are signed, according to Farmanara.

Other key personnel with the company include Canadian national sales manager Eddie White and Canadian director of publicity Virginia Kelly, both former employees of Beath at UA Classics in Toronto, and U.S. national sales manager Nick Perrott, former eastern sales manager for Cannon Films in N.Y.

Toronto lawyer and film financier David Perlmutter will act as a consultant to the new

company but will not be involved in day-to-day operations, according to Farmanara. He also said publicist Renee Furst, hired by Spectrafilm for the Cannes Film Festival, is not an employee but will work with the company on a "film to film" contract basis.

Financing will come from the Skyld Group of Toronto, headed by Norton Penturn and Barry Young, who was formerly with Perlmutter's National Film Financing Corp. Farmanara would not comment on how much the company would spend on first year operating costs, only saying "Spectrafilm has multi-million dollar backing." He also said Spectrafilm did not plan to invest in production.

TORONTO — *Old House, New House*, an Asterisk Films/Fitchman-Sweete co-production produced by David Springbett and Larry Weinstein, has won the top prize in the energy category from the Third Audubon International Film Festival.

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Larger than life story matched by lavish Canadian promotion

TORONTO — On May 27, the Astral Films/20th Century-Fox joint release of the Robert Cooper Production *The Terry Fox Story* opened in over 130 theatres across Canada, the largest-ever opening of a Canadian-made film. It also received perhaps the largest-ever publicity campaign for a Canadian feature, co-ordinated out of Toronto by Fox director of publicity André Beauregard and Astral's Shelley Schaeffer.

"Everything has to be created here — press kit, art work, poster, programs, buttons, T-shirts," said Beauregard. Added Schaeffer: "This [campaign] is strictly for Canada. No material is coming up from the U.S. as with a studio film."

The film has been licensed to American pay-TV channel Home Box Office and will not be released theatrically in the U.S., so the campaign has been an opportunity to design all aspects of the film's promotion to the particulars of the Canadian market.

The partnership proves mutually beneficial to both distributors, explained Schaeffer. "Astral has benefited from Fox's Canada-wide release pattern and Fox has benefitted from

Astral's experience of handling a film on a local level."

Over 5000 posters, 2000 press releases, and 600 press kits were sent out across the country before the film's release. All the material was developed and produced after the Astral/Fox joint distribution deal was signed Mar. 30, which made time a factor in the campaign.

Directed by Ralph Thomas, the film stars Eric Fryer as Terry Fox, Robert Duvall, Chris Makepeace, Rosalind Chao, Michael Zelnicker, Elva Mai Hoover, and Frank Adamson. Fryer, Makepeace, Zelnicker, and Thomas all made personal appearances and did interviews to promote the film.

Fryer, who made his acting debut in the film, did a promotional tour of Western Canada co-ordinated by Fox's Heather Macgillivray, stopping in four cities — Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, and Winnipeg — in five days. The Vancouver stop included over 25 interviews. Fryer also did a U.S. tour for HBO to Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, and Detroit.

Personal appearances and interviews also took place in Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa, Hamilton, Thunder Bay, and

Windsor. Telephone interviews were conducted for Regina, Saskatoon, and Kitchener.

The campaign received an assist from Robert Duvall, who agreed to do some *Fox Story* interviews in New York and at the Cannes Film Festival while promoting his own film *Angelo My Love*.

Television promotion has included a package of seven scene-clips sent to TV stations instead of the usual 1 or 2, all of which were compiled by the publicists. Also, CTV broadcast the Jilley Prod. documentary *The Making of the Terry Fox Story* to a national Sunday night prime-time audience May 22.

The Bank of Montreal is participating in the campaign as the film's corporate sponsor, having contributed a grant to promote the film. By May 27, posters, counter cards, handbills, and buttons promoting the film were to be in every B. of M. branch across the country. Two \$100-a-ticket Galas, May 25 in Toronto and May 26 in Vancouver, were sponsored by the bank, with proceeds going to

the Canadian Cancer Society.

Twenty-five premieres were held across Canada May 26, according to Beauregard, including French and English premieres in both Montreal and Quebec City. Many were for charity.

The Fox/Astral campaign also developed a School Study Guide based on the story of Terry Fox, which was sent to 6000 schools across Canada. Included was information on special screenings for school groups.

Test screenings, often part of Fox's marketing and promotional strategy, were held for industry members, the media, and the public. Beauregard estimates there were close to 100 screenings before the May 27 release.

"There's such a thing as overkill (with screenings), but not in this case," says Schaeffer. "With a subject like this, people are possibly hesitant at first. There is no better way to show them what it's about than with the movie."

Press screenings were not

limited to the trade press in order to give the film a broader profile. *Toronto Sun* sports-writer John Robertson, after screening the film, wrote a glowing column in the sports pages the next day. His article was incorporated into the campaign as part of 20 theatre-lobby standees set up in Toronto-area Famous Players Theatres May 20.

The tone of the large campaign from the beginning has been restrained. "Emphasis has been on selling a commercial product, a movie, not on selling the real Terry Fox" said Schaeffer. The publicists turned down all offers by local entrepreneurs to peddle Terry Fox T-shirts and other souvenirs, and the campaign's own T-shirt design understates both the film and the Marathon of Hope legacy.

"We never tried to do any promotion to resemble the real Terry Fox," said Beauregard. "We used material from the film, not from Terry Fox's life. We have been really careful in our promotion not to exploit the real Terry Fox."

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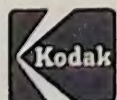
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C Channel short term

TORONTO — An 80-hour "survivathon" has brought financially troubled C Channel 5000 new subscribers and fresh sources of funds, but unless a capital infusion of \$3.5 million comes soon, that future will only be short-term.

Organized in 24 hours, the survivathon was produced by Jaime Paul Rock and Nancy Avery. Telecast out of C Channel's Toronto headquarters May 12-15 and carried unscrambled by the cable companies, the survivathon featured programming samples and pleas for subscribers by executives and personalities.

At the Canadian Cable Television Convention which began May 16 in Calgary, C Channel president Ed Cowan announced that the national special-interest pay licensee was looking for new investors to achieve new financing arrangements and to relaunch the service in September with a new marketing strategy.

Because of the financial situation C Channel's production commitments are on hold. The uncertain situation has caused it to lose one high-profile Canadian content production, the half-hour Leonard Cohen special *I Am A Hotel* which was licensed to the CBC after a last-minute deal. *I Am A Hotel*, for which C Channel was originally an equity participant, began taping as scheduled May 17 at Toronto's King Edward Hotel.

A two-hour concert documentary of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in Vienna, will be telecast June 6, as planned.

Fox/Astral ready for Porky's II

TORONTO — *Porky's II: The Next Day*, the sequel to the biggest money-making picture in Canadian film industry history, *Porky's* (which earned \$11 million in Canada, \$152 million worldwide in 1982), will open nationally June 24, distributed by Twentieth Century-Fox.

The film is being billed as "a 20th Century-Fox release of a Simon/Reeves/Landsburg Production and Astral Bellevue Parthe Inc. presentation." The producers are Bob Clark, the originator of *Porky's* (who also directs and co-wrote the script),

and Don Carmody. The original *Porky's* was co-produced by Harold Greenberg of Astral Prod. and Mel Simon, and was a joint release of Astral Films and Twentieth Century-Fox.

Returning cast members include Dan Monahan, Kaki Hunter, Wyatt Knight, Cyril O'Reilly, Roger Wilson, Tony Ganos, Mark Herrier, Scott Colomby, and Nancy Parsons. Newcomers include Joseph Running Fox, Bill Wiley, Cisse Cameron, and Ed Winter.

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Narrowcasting gets CRTC O.K.

OTTAWA — Stressing the increasingly competitive nature of the communications environment and the need for prompt action with regard to the introduction of new Canadian programming services, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has called for applications for new national specialty programming services in Canadian pay television.

In a public notice, May 4, the CRTC defined the specialty programming service as "narrow-cast television programming

designed to reflect the particular interests and needs of different age, language, cultural, geographic and other groups." The Commission sees these services as "complementary to the Canadian services at present available."

Though the CRTC stressed that it "has not yet arrived at all of its conclusions with respect to cable service tiering," the May notice has been widely interpreted as a *de facto* call for a third cable tier, in which basic cable would be the first tier, and general interest pay-

TV the second tier.

In its call for applications, the CRTC said the new specialty "services could be delivered to the public, mainly but not exclusively via satellite-to-cable networks and could be offered individually or through channel-sharing arrangements."

Stressing the complimentary nature of the new services, the CRTC said it was prepared to consider a wide range of ownership arrangements, including minority shareholder involvement by cable licensees. The CRTC said it wishes to maximize the many opportunities for

exposure of Canadian programming by stimulating the development of services using new technologies, while also making full use of Canadian production resources. The Commission felt the cable industry "could well respond to the growing need to combine such opportunities."

Gap of \$130 million in pay prods

TORONTO — The \$130 million gap between fees paid for Canadian pay-TV programs in the domestic market and the cost of making programs this year could increase to \$504 million by 1986, a recent report says.

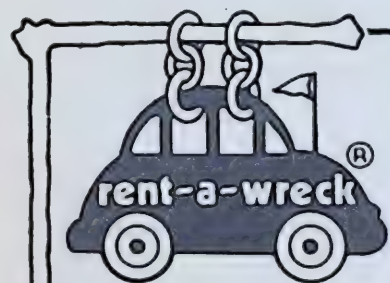
According to consulting firm Nordicity Group, the shortfall will have to be covered by sales to international markets, supplementary markets such as video cassette sales, and government subsidies, all of which could total \$64 million this year, rising to \$89 million by 1986.

According to the report, prepared for an industry committee of pay-TV licensees, producers and unions, the cost of productions needed to meet Canadian content requirements will be

an estimated \$197 million this year, rising to \$682 million by 1986. Actual production revenue in 1980 was \$124 million.

Fees from licensing to pay-TV and the sales of other rights to programs will total only \$68 million this year, or \$176 million by 1986. Producers would still have to recover \$66 million this year (and an estimated \$415 million in 1986) from sales to international and supplementary markets.

According to the report, US producers recover 70 to 80 percent of their production costs from a first sale in their domestic market. Canadian producers would have to recover two-thirds of their costs from sources other than the domestic market, the report says.



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SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupecsek

Celebration of Women in the Arts, organized by Edmonton actress Judith Mabey (*Parallels*) was held in Edmonton May 12 to 15. Avrel Fisher of the National Film Board headed the film program of the interdisciplinary conference.

The panel titled "From the Gleam in her Eye to the Flicker

on the Screen" examined the various ways and means women finance, produce and distribute films. Panelists were Wendy Wacko (producer, *Challenge: The Canadian Rockies* and *Doris McCarthy: Heart of a Painter*); Elvira Lount (producer/director, *Baby Clock*); Deborah Peaker (producer/di-

rector/writer, *Spirit of the Hunt*) and Donna Wong-Juliani (western rep for the Canadian Film Development Corporation and producer, *Latitude 55*).

Films screened included *Baby Clock*, a 60-minute documentary on the choices of five career women regarding children, produced and directed by Elvira Lount of Melkim Productions in Vancouver, already sold to London Weekend Television in England, and first prize winner

in the Family Relations and Parenting Category in the American Film Festival; *Doris McCarthy: Heart of a Painter*, a one-hour docu-drama produced by Wendy Wacko of Jasper, with sales to CBC and a U.S. arts network; *Lady in Motion*, a 27-minute documentary produced and directed by Helene White of HBW Film Productions, bronze medal winner in the New York Film and Television Festival; *Wallflower Order*, a

documentary about a feminist dance troupe produced by Marion Barling of Vancouver; and *Respectable Lie*; *Donna*; *Rape - Face to Face*; *End Game in Paris*; *P4W Prison for Women*; *Good Monday Morning*; and *Boundaries*. Other panelists were Norma Bailey, Cannes and Bijou award-winning director of *Nose and Tina*; Bonnie Kreps, filmmaker and writer, and Anne Wheeler, NFB, Edmonton.



National Film Board of Canada

Office national du film du Canada

NEWS

Bruce Cockburn to Score Wilderness Features

Canadian singer/songwriter Bruce Cockburn has just been signed to write the music score for a new feature-length wilderness documentary directed by Bill Mason. Tentatively titled *Water Walker*, the film is slated for theatrical release this fall. A co-production between NFB and Ontario-based IMAGO, a charitable society supporting art and artists, *Water Walker* is a story of Mason's odyssey, with friend and cameramen Ken Buck, on a canoeing-painting trip of Lake Superior and northern rivers. The film contains exciting white-water footage and, like Mason's previous feature *Cry of the Wild*, reflects his enthusiasm and concern for the great Canadian wilderness.

Goodbye War to Premiere on CBC

Goodbye War, a major new NFB series of seven one-hour episodes for television, has been bought by CBC for network telecast this fall. Written and hosted by London-based Canadian journalist and military historian Gwynne Dyer, the series look at the evolution of one of civilization's oldest institutions - war. Shot in ten countries, on two oceans, with the armed forces of six nations, *Goodbye War* contains unique interviews with Russian military leaders and remarkable footage of last summer's Israel-Lebanon war.



Ontario Showcase '83 lauds Gerald Potterton's *The Awful Fate of Melpomenus Jones*

A War Story bought by PBS

Edmonton filmmaker Anne Wheeler's award-winning feature documentary drama *A War Story* has been purchased by the American PBS network for four telecasts. The film, based on medical and personal diaries kept by Wheeler's father during his ordeal in a World War II Taiwanese prisoner-of-war camp, was shown theatrically in Canada last year by Cineplex and televised on the CBC network.

Ten to ANNECY

Ten NFB films will be screened at the 14th International Animated Film Festival in Annecy, France, June 7 - 11. In competition are *The Awful Fate of Melpomenus Jones* (Gerald Potterton), *Five Billion Years* (Joyce Borenstein), *The Sound Collector* (Lynn Smith), *Top Priority* (Ishu Patel), *The Tender Tale of Cinderella Penguin* (Janet Perlman),

Une âme à voile (Pierre Veilleux) and *Une histoire comme une autre* (Paul Driessen). *Distant Islands* (Bettina Maylone), *Friends of the Family* (Yossi Abolafia) and *Ice* (Robert Doucet) will be shown as part of the Information section.

Trim Bin...

NFB's Academy Award Winner, *If You Love This Planet*, directed by Montrealer Terri Nash, was in high demand at the NFB's booth at MIP-TV last month... *The Awful Fate of Melpomenus Jones*, an 8-minute animated film by Gerald Potterton based on a Stephen Leacock story, was the most popular film at Ontario Showcase '83... NFB has published a list of films about communications as part of its contribution to World Communications Year. The list is available to groups and organizations from NFB offices in Canada.

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Malcolm Harvey has resigned as manager of the film industry development office for the City of Calgary for family reasons. His new company, Callum Consulting Services, will be based in Victoria, B.C. At press time, his replacement was to be announced shortly... Bill Campbell of Campbell Post Production has done the sound edit on the Bob Barclay/CFCN production of the Lizzie Borden tale... Myrle Christensen is office manager for Four Nine Film Productions... *Wild Pony*, the low budget feature shot in Pincher Creek and Heritage Park in Calgary, premiered May 12 on First Choice... Peter D. Marshall is writing and directing *One Giant Step*, a series of 20 minute programs, for ACCESS Alberta.

Quebec law soon

QUEBEC CITY - The Quebec government intends to pass Bill 109, the proposed law on cinema and video, before the June end of the present parliamentary session.

The bill, which has gone through second reading, returns to closed parliamentary commission for line-by-line amendment before final passage.

On the government side, proposed amendments to the bill are still being decided upon, Michel Houle, policy advisor to Quebec cultural affairs minister Clément Richard, told Cinema Canada.

Minister Richard would either make those changes public prior to the parliamentary commission early in June or would unveil them at the commission, Houle said.

UA drops Cross Country

MONTREAL - On Jan. 26, Film-line Productions launched a suit against United Artists Corp. for "lack of performance" concerning the negative pick-up promised for the film *Cross Country*, says producer David Patterson. U.A. had refused to pick-up the film, charging that the film as delivered did not conform to the approved script, and that U.A. had not approved Bill Gray to rewrite the script, Patterson told Cinema Canada.

(Cont. on p. 13)

Toronto news in brief.. news in brief

TORONTO — A consortium headed by Garth Drabinsky and Cineplex Corp. no longer has the contract to restore and operate the Elgin/Wintergarden Theatre in downtown Toronto. A meeting of the Ontario provincial cabinet May 18 ratified a request from the Minister of Citizenship and Culture to call tenders for new operators. The original estimated cost of renovating the two historic theatres was \$8 million, with the ministry committed to paying no more than \$4 million. But after delays, the estimated cost of the project is reportedly now close to \$20 million. In February, Cineplex's bankers advised the board of the financially-troubled company not to proceed in the project.

Superchannel Alberta and Superchannel Ontario have signed a long-term, multi-picture agreement with RKO Classics to acquire over 40 Hollywood films from the '30s and '40s. Titles include *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Gunga Din*, *Morning Glory*, and the original versions of *Cat People* and *King Kong*.

Kim Corby has joined United Artists Classics of Canada to head the advertising and publicity department, replacing Virginia Kelly, who moved to the newly-created Spectrafilm. Corby has been advertising coordinator for Cineplex Corp. for the past two years... David

Plant has joined the City of Toronto Planning and Development department as a film liaison assistant, replacing Ian Dobson. He joins Rhonda Silverstone and will work under P&D head Naish McHugh in implementing Metro's film permit process... Memorial University (Nfld.) professor Phillip J. Warren has been appointed to a five-year, part-time term as a CRTC commissioner, effective April 14... CBC's *The National* has shifted science, medicine, and technology reporter Terry Milewski to its parliamentary bureau in Ottawa.

Film editor Evraire

TORONTO — Film editor Donald Evraire died May 4 after a short illness at Sunnybrook Medical Centre in Toronto. He was 47.

Born in Ottawa, Evraire began his career in that city with Crawley Films, before moving to Toronto in the late 1950s. He was film editor for CBC's current affairs programs *News magazine* and *Weekend* and for CTV's *W5* during his career. He also edited many productions for Film Arts, an independent production house in Toronto. Before his death, he was editor for features appearing on CBC's *Fifth Estate*. He is survived by his wife, Kiny, and two children, Kirsten and Aly.

Eight productions keep Devine busy

TORONTO — Producer David Devine of Videoworks Corp. of Toronto has been a busy man these past few months, with three projects in the can, two in post-production, and three more in active development.

Devine and associate producer Richard Mozer have completed a one-hour comedy *The Making of Strange Brew* with former SCTV and current *Strange Brew* stars Rick Moranis and Dave Thomas. Devine explains that unlike most other "The Making of..." films, this project is not shot as a behind-the-scenes documentary but as a comedy chronicling the antics of Moranis' and Thomas's on-screen characters, the hoser McKenzie Brothers.

Devine, Mozer, and co-producer Morden have also shot two concerts for Toronto-based music promoters Concert Productions International. First is a 90-minute *Stray Cats and Deserters* concert taped live at Massey Hall on March 31, 1983, and the second is a two-hour Chris De Burgh show, with

Vancouver band Doug and the Slugs, taped at Hamilton Place on April 20. Executive producers for both projects are Dusty Cohl, Michael Cohl, Stephen Howard, and Bill Ballard.

The two concerts are part of an intended 14-part series to be produced by CPI this year, depending on how the CRTC rules on the Canadian content status of concerts featuring international and Canadian acts taped in Canada by Canadian production companies. The CRTC has told the industry that Canadian performers must have equal billing with foreign performers to qualify as Canadian content. Last month, the CRTC turned down Canadian content status for CPI's production of *The Who Farewell Concert* taped at Maple Leaf Gardens in December and aired on First Choice in February.

Devine is also working on post-production on a comedy show *Live at the Rivoli*, which would feature world-class stand-up comedians and be sold as interstitial programming to

pay-TV channels. Executive producer is Jonathan Gross.

Another program currently being edited is a 24-minute rock and roll/roller-skating concept video featuring Heather Thomas (co-star of the TV series *Fall Guy*) and shot in Venice, California. Co-producing are Thomas, Devine, and Stephen Rice.

(Cont. from p. 12)

According to Patterson, a producer from U.A. was often in Montreal during the shoot, and the American Major was aware of the progress of the film at all times. "U.A. backed out of several other deals on the same day as Filmline received its letter. One wonders whether there was some corporate motivation beyond the specific complaints made against the film," Patterson told Cinema Canada.

The film, directed by Paul Lynch, was described in a recent *Variety* as "squarely aimed at an audience used to crude exploitation fare."

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The final chapter

During the international film festival at Cannes, world attention turns to national cinema, as countries trot out their best films and vie with each other for notice. The festival is one of the yard-sticks against which the worth of a national effort can be measured.

This year, only two Canadian features were chosen, one for the Directors' Fortnight, and another in a less prestigious selection called *Un certain regard*. Neither attracted much attention. Officially, the Canadian star – which was rising in the early '70s – has waned, and with it, the hopes of many filmmakers.

Ironically, this happens at a time when the Canadian film industry is busily retooling to confront the new age of television, with the energetic assistance of a flurry of fresh policies from the minister of Communications.

So it is perhaps worth remembering how the same well-meaning government approved measure after measure, to shore up the film industry, and at the same time only succeeded in completely undermining that very industry. The occasional fine film is still made in Canada, but it is an exception; more often than not, those films are made despite the measures meant to 'create an infrastructure' upon which a healthy, vibrant film industry should rest.

It began with the tax shelter. The financial incentive proposed and adopted in 1974 came out of the blue, unaccompanied by any serious film policy from the Secretary of State's office. Its first years gave us a host of co-productions, and triggered the immigration to Canada of several producers who would color those first years. (Remember Julian Melzack and Harry Allan Towers?)

Events then followed in quick succession. The CCA provisions were tightened against abuse, but no film policy was written to steer the course. McCabe replaced Spencer at the CFDC, ushering in an era of fast moving, short-sighted deals which left the industry devastated after a few boom years.

In its frenzy, the industry had turned-off the financiers, the general public and even the department of Finance, which rolled back the tax shelter.

The only people not turned off were those Americans who understood that, through alliances of mutual interest, a weak Canadian production industry could always be co-opted to suit American requirements. The producers who flourished, or seemed to flourish, at the end of the tax shelter period were those producers who had built strong ties to the American system, producing films for the Majors and working to the rhythms of commercial television.

Understanding that the demise of tax shelter incentive was threatening the entire industry – and that no serious infrastructure had resulted from a truly monumental influx of capital into that industry – the minister turned to pay-TV, hastening its arrival in Canada and welcoming it as the final saviour of film production. Hearings, briefs and individual comment all made it abundantly clear that, given the Canadian market, the CRTC must proceed with caution; that the American experience could not serve as an ideal model, and that over-licensing would lead to yet greater dislocation and perhaps bankruptcy. Fearlessly – and heedless as always of the opinion of those who work in the industry – the CRTC granted seven licenses to operate; and the dismal results are with us now.

Too much, too soon, and too unimaginative: pay-TV in Canada offers nothing new and exciting to producers or viewers. But it has increased the numbers of mediocre films available to the public for a price, and it has generously brought pornography into the living-rooms of the nation. Perhaps 'pornography' is still an exaggeration, but the pay stations report that subscribers are already demanding that hard-core replace the soft fare offered by Playboy.

And so, we enter the new era – with ACTRA writing guidelines for nude auditions, production of porn mushrooming, and many Canadian producers feeling themselves compromised or excluded from the promised land of pay-TV.

How predictable that C Channel, the only pay station to receive high marks all around for its dealing with producers and its intention to screen Canadian productions of high calibre, is now – given the pay-TV environment structured by the CRTC – in dire straits.

As if surprised by what the lack of serious policy has engendered, the minister tries once again to salvage something from what had been a promising artistic milieu in the early '70s – before all the various measures designed to create an industry infrastructure. Suddenly a broadcast policy appears, made up of incoherent thrusts, coupled with a still unreleased film policy. Now there's the broadcast program development fund. And an extension of co-production treaties to include television.

This then is really the final chapter. The CFDC has shared with the private sector its policies concerning the administration of the broadcasting fund. It suggests watering down the Canadian content requirements for 24 months, and states that it will be autonomous – free from both the CCA requirements and those of the CRTC – in its decisions concerning that content.

Next month, a world premiere will take place – the official signing of a television co-production treaty between France and Canada. The intentions of the treaty are to increase the quantity and quality of francophone production, and one can hardly argue with that. But Canada's past experience with co-production treaties is that we have difficulty policing them (remember *Caro Papa*?) and no mechanism at all for verifying the source of the investment put up by a Canadian producer (remember *Little Gloria*?).

Having failed to make anything of our theatrical film production except an extension of the American system, the government has latched onto indigenous television production in a final effort to 'safeguard' Canadian culture. Yet experience shows that the government has an enormous problem bridging the gap between the intentions of its various strategies, and the concrete results to which these strategies lead.

With First Choice putting a freeze on its Canadian content commitments, with

Anglo-American interests offering financially desperate producers entry to their own private \$50 million production fund, the Canadian government's policy initiatives seem already out of date – even before having been tried.

And still no one knows what the film policy holds. That – the final piece of these piecemeal policies – was due in April. And then May, then June. Now the minister says we can look for it by late Fall. Late, indeed.

Too late.

LETTERS

Edmonton, eh?

Francis Fox has created a new fund of monies to be directed into television production. In Calgary this past week, two events occurred which focus on the assistance fund.

First, the Canadian Cable Television Association met for its annual convention. One of the sore points was the Lalonde budget's 6% tax which eventually ends up in the CFDC-administered fund. Cable operators couldn't accept being singled out and nothing the Minister or CRTC vice-chairman John Lawrence could say changed their minds.

Second, André Lamy and his crew happened to be passing through the same city to brief Alberta filmmakers about the television assistance fund. Which reinforces a fear that I have had for many years about the CFDC: it doesn't understand television, and it still doesn't know the specifics of regional activity in the industry.

My reason for coming to this conclusion is quite simple. Mr. Lamy met with film people in the city which aspires to be the film centre for our province. Mr. Lamy did not meet with the core of Alberta's television producers, because they reside in Edmonton and few knew of the meeting until a day after it had taken place.

I personally know of two major television producers who have independent companies that are well-known in the Canadian and foreign industries. Based in Edmonton, neither knew of the meeting until I mentioned it to them upon my return from the cable convention. I only stumbled across the meeting, held at the NFB offices in Calgary, when I went to the Board to pick up some papers that had been couriered in from Montreal for me. Mr. Lamy seemed quite indifferent when I suggested that the meeting should have occurred in Edmonton, but did say he hoped to get back west at some indefinite time in the future.

David Balcon
Edmonton

Quest for credit

Having just received your issue No. 95 (being on location working on *The Iceman*), I noticed that you made an error in the "Errata" on p. 13. There were only two people nominated for makeup on *Quest For Fire*, Sara Monzani and myself. We are also the winners. (We also won a British Academy Award.)

The reason our names were not called out at the Oscars was because Christopher Tucker felt he deserved an Oscar

also. He designed the three main characters' makeup but he never worked on the film. His claim to the award is being dealt with by the Academy on May 24. But there's no dispute as to our winning. I suggest you call the Academy for further details.

Michèle Burke
Vancouver

From Beverly Hills, a spokesperson for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences told Cinema Canada that a final decision had been reached May 24. But as "the parties involved have not been informed yet, we're not at liberty to divulge what that decision was." – Ed.

Kudos for Kupecek

I have just finished perusing the latest edition of your magazine and thought that I would pass along my commendations for Linda Kupecek's *Shoot Alberta* column.

Like the entire magazine, I find Ms. Kupecek's column articulate, and professionally reported. Although I am a resident of Alberta I use *Shoot Alberta* as a fair and accurate source of what's happening within the province... confirming and discrediting the many rumors and stories that seem so prevalent within our industry.

I'm glad to have taken the opportunity to congratulate Linda and the entire staff of Cinema Canada for a job well done!

Garry S. Toth
Toth and Associates,
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Format foibles

I would like to suggest that you change the size of your periodical. It is very difficult to shelve in the library. It is too high to stand in the boxes, and too wide to lie flat.

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Through a stranger's eyes

Gilles Carle and the image of Quebec

by Richard Martineau

Gilles Carle has mentioned his uneasiness about adapting novels, his balancing act between respect for a novel and a desire to go further. *Maria Chapdelaine* suffers from this indecisiveness from beginning to end. Like a lot of his other

Richard Martineau writes for a number of Quebec film publications.

films, to tell the truth. For example, he sets up the elements of a certain political and social criticism in *La mort d'un bûcheron* without really taking his ideological commitment all the way. Or, in *Fantastica*, he traces a certain parallel between theatre and life without ever expressing it fully. Or he connects chess to international politics in *The Great Chess Movie*, without ever going beyond simple assertion. It almost seems that with Gilles Carle there's a gulf between

conception and act, between idea and result that he can't cross. It's as if Gilles Carle has never been willing to follow his choices to their final consequences. I think that only *Les Plouffe* comes off all right in this respect, along with *La vraie nature de Bernadette*, his best film to date. However, the novel of *Les Plouffe* didn't pose the same problem in its adaptation: the situations and the treatment were clear and the characters well enough developed to be interesting

and, what is more, the original author was there to participate in the screen-writing.

If *Maria Chapdelaine* ultimately fails as a psychological film, never living up to its ambitions, it's the same failure as in its reconstruction of traditional Quebec folk-ways. There also, Carle is torn between Hemon's vision of our customs and a need for authenticity. In this regard, and other critics have noticed this, several details are confusing: for

example, the consumption of maple syrup in a region that doesn't have any, or the unprecedented appearance of a deer in Peribonka. Although an effort was made to recreate the Lac St-Jean region in 1910 more or less credibly, at many points it just doesn't work. The characters are so unbelievable in themselves that the historical reconstruction seems all the more suspect, all the more mannered. As for the atmosphere, let's just say that it only rarely rises above the most simplistic level. The beautiful exteriors and the often slick cinematography together create a clichéd romanticism. And the waterfalls and other 'sexual' symbols seem more like awkward attempts to link the characters at any price to the landscape than truly suggestive imagery. This veneer of Freudian symbols tacked on to Maria's story is reminiscent of *La tête de Normande St-Onge*, where every sequence was crammed with little corners in which Carle tucked away all too many such symbols. And it's done in a rhythm and in a manner so mechanical that these symbols freeze up and, from contributing to an atmosphere, bring to the surface all its artifice and phoniness. Here also, there's a big gap between the creative concept and the final product.

Even though sympathetic, the look Hémon cast on the Québécois and their culture was also quite condescending. The Québécois are depicted as naive; simple, if not simplistic; and obliged, because of their lack of culture and education, to turn to their priests for counsel. Their traditions, their leisure activities, their religious fervor were seen and described by Hémon with a certain distance, as if he was a father describing the innocent activities of his children. What he describes is often right. It is the way he does it that is so offensive. But the Québécois were not fooled. They rejected the book as soon as it appeared. It was only later, when Hémon's novel was acclaimed around the world, that *Maria Chapdelaine* gained their admiration. If people from other countries greatly admired the novel, didn't it merit the same reaction from us?

Politically, Carle has always preferred a cinema of observation to a cinema that is, if not militant, at least clearly oriented. In other words, his films present a certain socio-political situation that Carle chooses to observe and rarely bothers to analyse. His films merely present, but don't go any farther. The spectator must draw his own conclusions because none are imposed upon him. Carle's films reject demonstration and so do not raise the consciousness of the average viewer. It is because of this that his most politically oriented film is *La vraie nature de Bernadette*, in which he supports collective action and rejects individual idealists. In the latter film, the filmmaker speaks out while in most of his other films, neither the characters nor the director seem conscious of the situation which is being treated.

It is fruitless to go on with the debate between these opposing visions of what cinema should accomplish. Carle's attitude, based on a respect for the viewer and a desire to transpose reality in all its complexity and ambiguity is a comprehensible one. Not every filmmaker likes a didactic approach. The problem, however, arises when a filmmaker continues along these lines when adapting a novel that has very strong political overtones. In such a case, this stubborn attitude takes on another dimension.

That's what's wrong with *Maria Chap-*

delaine. In the novel, Louis Hémon did not merely present anecdotes or sentimental dramas experienced by Maria. Written by a Frenchman while in Québec and first published in Canada in 1916, *Maria Chapdelaine* contributed greatly to the sense of cultural alienation experienced by the Québécois. Once again, they were defined by a foreigner. But this time, for the whole world, because the novel was translated into 18 languages and published in 25 countries. The after-effects of *Maria Chapdelaine* have not been easily dissipated. For a long time and still today, there kept reappearing a vague desire by Québécois to evaluate themselves in the light of foreign criteria and to be reassured by France on the validity of their culture. Thus, a certain national insecurity often inclined the Québécois to search not for the opinion of others but for their continual approval. From its first edition, this French book was taken nonetheless as a "model of Canadian literature."

We cannot overlook this aspect of the novel. It is, in fact, as important as the story and its undeniable quality as a work of literature. Adapting *Maria Chapdelaine*, now, in Québec, offers a chance to the Québécois to 're-appropriate,' in a way, their image and to put things in their real perspective. In essence, two alternatives present themselves to the screenwriter: either he can remain true to the novel and so redefine Québec through a stranger's eyes, or he can go against the grain of the novel and, using the story of Maria, impose a vision indigenous to Québec. In this case, he would place the foreign vision in its real perspective.

Once again, Gilles Carle prefers not to take sides. He sticks to anecdotes. What interests him is the passion, the almost supernatural quality of the novel, and the respect Hémon showed for physical effort, for nature and for the courage of the people. Carle's refusal to articulate any political message is expressed in two different ways.

First of all, as a director, he refuses to interpret *Maria Chapdelaine* in such a way as to present a realistic vision of the characters as Québécois. Worse still, he presents things in such a way that we can get the impression that, like Hémon, he is shaping Québec à la Française. He

introduces some picturesque details (as mentioned above), but there are other revealing details. There's the glaring fact that the Péribonka *habitants* speak an almost impeccable international French. The role of the priest, a paternalistic figure *par excellence* according to Hémon, is played by a French actor, Claude Rich. And it's Carole Laure, a star idolized by the French, who plays Maria Chapdelaine even though she does not typify the earthy image of the heroine described by Hémon. But, after all, this is not so surprising. We have to remind ourselves that this cinematographic adaptation of *Maria Chapdelaine* was above all the project of French producers attracted by the box-office appeal of Carole Laure. And it is only because of Laure that Carle got the job.

Secondly, as an adapter, Carle refuses to acknowledge any political content. This is indicated by his decision to kill off the mother before killing off François Paradis, thus reversing the novel's sequence of events. It is also indicated in his deliberately ignoring all the patriotic undertones that are present in the final chapters of the novel. In the book, Maria decides to marry Eutrope Gagnon partly out of respect for her dead mother's wish (to see this savage country domesticated) and partly for the sake of her people's future (to stay in Québec in spite of hardship). But in the film, she makes this decision for purely sentimental reasons. Because François Paradis, the love of her life, has just died, she resigns herself to marrying a man who loves her since she cannot marry the man she loves. Thus, what was a collective and 'nationalist' choice becomes a personal choice. From this point of view, it is strange to see that Carle, who claims to have liked *Les Plouffe* because one could see the general in the particular, does the reverse. He makes out of a novel dealing with a collectivity nothing more than a personal drama. Not only does Carle refuse to place the naive nationalism and the stifling isolationism in a more realistic and concrete perspective, but he simply ignores these elements altogether.

The fact that Carle ignores them, compounded with the shallow psychology of the film, makes *Maria Chapdelaine* a film that presents a superficial

Québec full of simple and simplistic people. Thus, the French idea of the Québécois, expounded by Hémon, is confirmed.

It is astounding that a Québécois filmmaker approaching the 'myth' of *Maria Chapdelaine* should give us such a politically bland film. To really understand what it's all about, it is interesting to note what Carle has said about his film: that although he doubted Maria's popularity in Québec, he was sure – smile intact – of its success in France. Thus the failure of *Les Plouffe* is avenged. The solution is simple. It is to give the French what they expect, even if it deals with our national image. Once again, Québec is the object, and not the subject, of this story aimed mainly at the French.

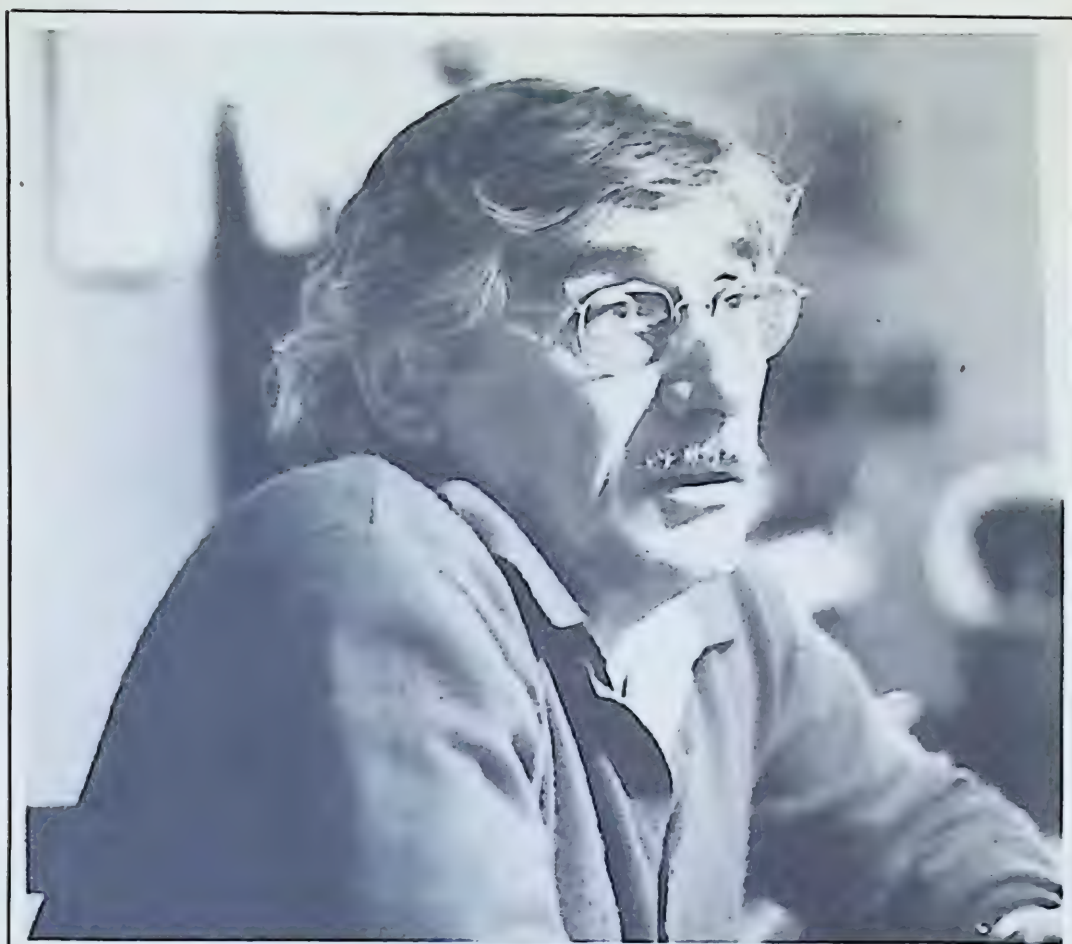
To study *Maria Chapdelaine* in light of other films by Gilles Carle does not provide more positive results. Even if many of his favorite themes can be identified (nature, sexuality, family, the Church), they are presented in an artificial and superficial way. They seem tacked on. His themes are not developed. They only serve the story. More than ever, Carle has put himself at the service of a story and so has subordinated many elements of his universe that were present in Hémon's novel in favour of Maria's story. Unlike his other films that possessed a loose structure with the story going off in many directions, by which the numerous themes and situations made the film open to several realities, *Maria Chapdelaine* unfolds around a single narrative thread. Without any doubt, this film is Carle's purest, most direct and most easily accessible work. All his themes are diluted and, though they are easily integrated into the story, their importance and impact are weakened.

The 'auteurist' approach to a film does not really work with *Maria Chapdelaine*. The film is first and foremost a commercial venture whose links with earlier films by Carle are too obvious to be interesting. Carle's presence can be felt only occasionally, especially in his treatment of the Church's authority. Maria's father looks at his watch during Mass, uninterested children recite their Catechism, and the people sing a hymn while François Paradis lies dying in the snow. All these little details articulate a certain critical attitude towards the Church, whether or not Carle owns up to this. The rest of the film is pretty thin. However, digging deep, we can associate the end of the film, when Maria Chapdelaine decides to marry Eutrope Gagnon, with other Carle films in which Laure has starred. Gagnon leads the same kind of life as Maria's father – and one of the recurring themes in Carle/Laure films is the search for the Father.

All in all, Carle's most recent film can only disappoint. It is disappointing for those who expect to be entertained, because of the cold and unbelievable characters. It is disappointing for those expecting to see the novel served up à la québécoise, because of Carle's refusal to engage himself in an openly political work. It is also disappointing to those who are searching for key elements that might shed new light on Gilles Carle's work as a whole. In fact, *Maria Chapdelaine* proves to be his weakest film. At least *Fantastica* was based on a more interesting and risky idea, whereas this adaptation of *Maria* is just a simple *mise-en-images*. Without imagination. Without audacity. Without life. Three factors without which no cinema is possible.



● The idol and the director: Carle instructs Carole Laure in *Maria Chapdelaine*



● "The left, you know, never revolutionized anything in art; that's too bad but that's the way it is"

Maria Chapdelaine :

Carle versus Louis Hémon

Cinema Canada : *Until La Tête de Normande St-Onge, all your films seemed to be the result of a reaction—a reaction against the 'candid-eye' movement, against the French New Wave, against your last film. Is this method still the basis of your work ?*

Gilles Carle : I always try to take people by surprise. First of all, I like my latest film to be unexpected, even for me, because I don't want to be caught in a rut, I want to live between each of my films. When I finished *Les Plouffe*, everybody offered me TV series, things like that, but I preferred to do a film on chess, a documentary called *The Great Chess Movie* or *Jouer sa vie*. I had just finished a film about life in Quebec during the war, and suddenly I was into the most contemporary world, dealing with the relations between East and West, the world as a big chess game, a very current movie. And now I have just done *Maria Chapdelaine*, which is a very unexpected project too, this novel written by Louis Hémon that has already been adapted twice on film. And after that, I'll probably direct a Christmas story for children.

Cinema Canada : *So we can say that the character of Maria Chapdelaine is, in a way, a creature of Gilles Carle ?*

Gilles Carle : Inevitably it's true, even if you don't want it to be. The same thing happened to Louis Hémon. He came to Quebec to write *Maria Chapdelaine* and what did he do ? He looked around and he took notes, and more notes, and more notes ; he was the perfect observer, trying to be true to our culture. But, really, the result was more a Louis Hémon book than a Quebecois book. It's much more of a Celtic book, a druidical book, a book from Brittany, than a book from Quebec, if we look at it closely. It's a book in which Christianity is superstitious, in which the real religion is more animistic, pantheistic, with its emphasis on physical efforts, relations with the

land, the trees, the wind, etc. So, of course, when I took *Maria Chapdelaine*, I wanted to keep myself from doing us just another Gilles Carle movie. I tried to hide it, but there's always something that escapes me, and it shows on the screen. We just can't help it, even if we don't want it to happen. I hate doing personal movies ; on the contrary, I would like to be some sort of a collective filmmaker, but I can't help having my fantasies, my ideas, my background. I studied visual arts, so I have a tendency to do painterly things, just as (André) Forcier does things in a different way, whether he likes to or not.

Cinema Canada : *But when La tête de Normande St-Onge, your last film for Carle-Lamy, was released, you said : "From now on, I'm going to make more and more disturbing films," and you gave us Fantastica, Les Plouffe and Maria Chapdelaine. What happened ?*

Gilles Carle : Well, it all depends where we're situated, and how. For example, you forget *L'ange et la femme*. I did it at my own expense in my basement. I processed it myself, nobody wanted to give me money. I did it with \$25,000. They refused it at the Semaine de la Critique here. The film was demolished everywhere, as if I had just produced a super flop. Nobody accepted it. I was a bit naive, believing that with a black-and-white movie, 16mm, produced with my own money, I would have some sympathy from the critics, but it was horrible ! When the film was released, the newspaper critics were unanimous in their attack. But, of course, that changed, because two months after, I received a prize at the Avoriaz Festival, the Critics' Prize, and the film was strongly acclaimed by Arrabal, etc. Everything changed all at once. The critics were very favourable to the film, chiefly in the French Communist newspapers.

It was a very disturbing film that I did just after *Normande St-Onge*, so I didn't

break my promise. After you make a film like that, what do you do ? The contrary. And this is what happened with *Les Plouffe*. Everybody was against *L'ange et la femme*, so I said : "Nobody wants it ? Then I'll make *Les Plouffe*." And after I made *Les Plouffe*, which was acclaimed everywhere, which had a big success... a film about chess. This too was a surprise for the public ! And believe me, I refused everything everybody offered me at that time ; everything, I refused all the publicity they offered me. Because while I investigated the chess world, gathered all the information I could find, and made sure every fact was precise and true, they gave me this poster showing a child playing chess — and there's no child in the film. So the producers said, "But you don't want your film to be seen !", and I said, "I don't want **any** news release, **any** publicity, just go to hell !" So what happened is that the Montreal World Film Festival made my film known — I took all the chances, all the risks. And the film dealt with a subject nobody wanted to hear about since 1925, not one film about chess since 1925, even television, which is interested in everything — curling, pool, etc. — didn't want to deal with this most fascinating world. Fascinating, because the world of chess is an intellectual world, a political world, but they just didn't want to hear about it. So, again, I did the contrary of what everybody was waiting for. And even now, after doing a film in which reason dominates, a film about a rational world, I do *Maria Chapdelaine*, which is a film about passion, feelings. And next time, it'll still be a surprise, because I don't want to do the same thing over and over. Everybody would like to label me, because I work fast and I please my producers — and in a way, it's true — but I want to do different things.

Cinema Canada : *Let's talk about Maria Chapdelaine. In La mort d'un*

bûcheron, the character played by Carole Laure was named Maria Chapdelaine, and this character falls in love with a man named François Paradis. Did you want, at that time, to do a film adaptation of the novel by Louis Hémon ?

Gilles Carle : I think that one of the first films I ever wanted to shoot was *My Name is Maria Chapdelaine, Je m'appelle Maria Chapdelaine*. As far as I can remember, the myth of Maria Chapdelaine always interested me, probably because when I was very young I saw the film by Duvivier and I found it very strange. It didn't look like it was shot here in Quebec ; I found the film bizarre. So it's probably at that time the idea came to me. And because it's a good story, too, a story that happens in a very precise place, a story that just couldn't happen anywhere else, that had to happen in this place where it came into the world. It's a beautiful story ; and in Quebec we don't have too many love stories, we just didn't write many of them, so it's nice to tell each other "I love you," and this is what *Maria* is about, too. Feelings communicated by feelings.

Cinema Canada : *Isn't it a bit strange that Gilles Carle, who so often demystified the back-to-nature movement, now gives us Maria Chapdelaine ?*

Gilles Carle : Well, you know, they said I demystified this movement because of *La vraie nature de Bernadette*. But it's untrue ; what I did was say nature just doesn't exist anymore. When I shot *Bernadette*, jets were flying over my head, machines were running on the plains, but back at the time of *Maria Chapdelaine*, nature existed (laughs), that's why Hémon was here. If nature hadn't existed, Louis Hémon wouldn't have come to Quebec. So nature existed then, but not anymore. Urban society is everywhere now ; whether we go to the country or to the Beauce, there isn't a place where urbanism isn't established.

But in 1910, it wasn't. So, there's nostalgia in *Maria*, and it's because he had nostalgia for a more primitive and purer humanity that Hémon came here. Just take a look at what he says about the Indians. His view of them is a very mythic one, the Indians of *Maria* are not real ones, they're seen from the eyes of Hémon: there's no sorcerer in the Montagnais community, you know. But Hémon said there was. He imagined these sorcerers, and all their rites, their mysteries. So there's this thing about the love potion, the magic, the cypress-wood fire, etc. It's all pure invention from a Frenchman living in Quebec. But I respect the book, and this nostalgia that he felt, this nostalgia for a primitive world. I put it in the movie – but it doesn't mean that I personally believe in nature and that I preach a return to nature in *Maria Chapdelaine*, far from it.

Cinema Canada: In the last interview you gave to Cinema Canada (No. 74, May 1981), you said you wouldn't like to work on an adaptation of a book whose author was dead. Did this situation cause you any problems?

Gilles Carle: Many. Many, many problems. I started working on the screen-

thought about showing flashbacks of François, and showing Maria thinking about him, to emphasize her revolt against God, but I just couldn't use this stupid method. So it's only when I finally decided that the film would end just after the death of François Paradis that I was really happy, and ready to do it, to work on *Maria Chapdelaine*. I had to show the death of the mother, because in the book this part is almost a book by itself, but I couldn't drag it on endlessly. I feel badly about these changes. *Maria Chapdelaine* is not a very old book, you know. And the work of Louis Hémon is very well known, so it was difficult. But now and then, when I look at the film, I find that it is still almost too faithful to the book, that I could have put some more drama into the film, added some more things.

Cinema Canada: Isn't it strange that Gilles Carle, a founder of Les Éditions de l'Exagone, a publishing house which rejected the primacy of French culture and all picturesque novels à la Lemelin, directed Les Plouffe and Maria Chapdelaine?

Gilles Carle: But *Les Plouffe* was written by a Québécois. It's not a picturesque

recites a thousand Ave (Marias) to make sure nothing bad happens to François.

Cinema Canada: But don't you think that Hémon was particularly condescending towards us?

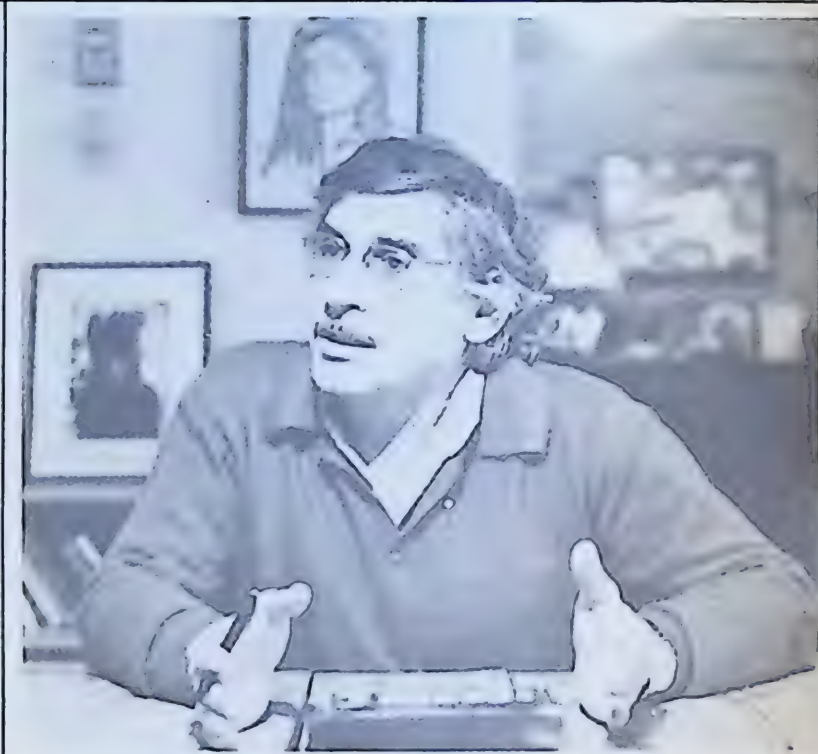
Gilles Carle: No, he wasn't. Hémon didn't believe much, he just believed in spirits, more than in God, and that's why the characters in *Maria Chapdelaine* don't seem to have a profound faith. All their gestures, their prayers, are superficial; when you look at it closely, there's not much profundity in that – except Maria's revolt, at the end, when she addresses herself to God and says, "Ah, Jesus, there wasn't even an angel to protect him, you couldn't find anybody to look after him!" There, for the first time, we have the impression she's talking to somebody that exists; that is, God. Before that, you know, the thousands Aves, the prayers at night, the demons, all kinds of demons (the demons of lies, etc., the mother has a demonology which is unbelievable), all that is not very serious.

Cinema Canada: You seem to have avoided all the political aspects of Maria Chapdelaine. Why?

When she's somewhere, nature vibrates in a different way. She's really a witch.

That's why Hémon was a pantheist, that's why he believed in the spirits of the Montagnais, the great Wendigo. I have been accused of inventing this, but I can take the book and read you many excerpts where it's very, very clear. But, before, nobody noticed that. I only did a re-reading of the book, and, knowing this mentality because of my father (who believed the Indians controlled the weather) and my uncles and my aunts, reconstituted it a bit more without exaggerating, making sure it had the same role as in the book. So, there's no rebellion, no politics. If we read the book very rapidly, we can say that it is a bit racist, in praising the race. It's because Hémon used the word "race" for the word "people," that's all.

It's a populist book, not a racist one. And we can say that his nationalism is more a regionalism; his nationalism is about the region of Lac-St-Jean, a corner of land. A regionalism like the one of the Bretons, of the Celts, that says you must be part of a family in order to communicate with the spirits. So he found his family. Hémon's religion is the religion of the farmers, the religion of the crops,



play only when I decided that I would be faithful to the meaning of the book, but without transposing it word by word. When I realized that this book was not a novel, but mainly an account; well, half the book is an account, and the other half is a kind of a reflection on the first half. And only when I realized that could I render all of Maria's thoughts, why she doesn't want to go to the States, why she wants to live at Péribonka. I only had to show the beauty of Spring while she says "Yes, I'll stay." But these decisions were difficult. There has to be some betrayal, and for that you need the permission of the author, and I didn't have it. Lydia Hémon said that the film was perfectly faithful to the work of her father, but really it's not. It's only faithful to the meaning of the book.

Cinema Canada: But why the decision to show the death of the mother before the disappearance of François Paradis?

Gilles Carle: To serve the dramatic effect of the film. Because, at the movies, you cannot imagine things, you can't reflect on things as if you were speaking or reading; we just can't imagine that the film could have continued for 40 minutes after the death of François Paradis. If it had, I would have had to use flashbacks, and I hate this method. I

novel, it's a "familiar" novel, a novel of everyday life; picturesque is the view a stranger has of us, just as I have a picturesque view of France, not a "familiar" one. *Les Plouffe* is a "familiar" film. You know, in *Maria*, I restored all the "familiarity" of the subject, I left Hémon out of it because he made some mistakes, not many, but some, in his description of us. But I remained faithful to the context, the times. I was raised on the land, so I know the landscape from the inside, more than I knew the world of *Les Plouffe* ultimately. But *Les Plouffe* belongs to us, like *Les misérables* to the French. You know, Lemelin was rebelling when he wrote *Les Plouffe*, and what was difficult was to render this rebellion properly. Because, don't forget, the book was Lemelin was taking position strongly against the Church, it was a very anti-clerical book.

Cinema Canada: Which is totally the opposite to the book by Hémon.

Gilles Carle: Well, Hémon was very polite, he wasn't at home, he was a guest. He wrote a sort of homage to Quebec, and at the end he fell into a sort of racism, you know. But it is clear, I think, in my film that this religious aspect is not too profound, that it is more of a superstition, like when Maria

Gilles Carle: Which political aspects? Nothing is political in the novel.

Cinema Canada: Well, like the role of the priests, and the choice Maria makes at the end, between the two men, each of them representing a very specific political choice for the Quebec people.

Gilles Carle: First, there's no criticism of the Church in the book, I don't see where Hémon criticizes the priests. There's no political criticism in *Maria Chapdelaine*. The choice at the end is a very schematic one, between the adventurer, the farmer and the American. But there isn't a single wicked character; Louis Hémon is incapable of describing a wicked character, or a vicious situation. His look is not political, he's only interested in the physical, the athletic, the beauty of things, the people. He was in love with the character of the father; he imagined him to be very tall, like Zeus in a way. In its relations with the landscape, the book is more profound than we think it is. It has a kind of lunar side, Maria is an enchantress. Maria is energy. You know, she's that kind of person who changes an atmosphere just by entering a room, everybody looks at her, and there's like a lunar atmosphere in the place. Take her out of the book and you're left with nothing.

of the sun, etc.; the true religion of these people, because we now know that the farmers were not so Catholic after all, that there's a religion which is more present in their lives; namely, the religion of nature. And that I tried to show in my film by the use of images. By the way, notice that there are more shots in this film than in *Les Plouffe*, twice as much as in any normal-length movie. I wanted to give the feeling that this film is all in one shot, I wanted the spectator to pass from one season to another without really noticing it. I wanted to give a sense of the passing of a year, of the cycle of the seasons.

You know, this book is very nourishing, there's a lot of detail, but not journalistic details. The details are not useless, they're always in relation to something else. It's a book in which there's a lot of imagination, it's a book that invented a new kind of love story. Each piece of information participates in the drama, which is the drama of living, and not the drama of individuals. And it is in this sense that the book is so seductive; that's why it was such a huge success.

It's also a book from the (political) right. Hémon, like all the great restorers, was a man of the right, like Celine. The left never revolutionized anything in art, you know; it's too bad but that's the

way it is. It's because the right touches structure, while the left touches individuals. It's always people from the right who break down forms, people who are related to existing structures. And I think that for Hémon, it's a bit the same thing; he broke the ancient pattern of the love story to construct a new one, based on the waiting of the woman, and the desperate effort of the man to reach her. And this pattern is also expressed in the landscape, the land, the country, with all those rivers and those waterfalls, symbols of ejaculation, of masculinity; and the lake, level and calm, not too deep, a lake that warms up easily (laughs), symbol of femininity. Harlequin books have cornered 12% of the international market, using the same story over and over again. Harlequin books, romance, they all copy *Maria Chapdelaine*. But getting back to Hémon, he was also revolutionary in his own way: he was the first sports columnist ever, he fought against pollution, he did his jogging...

Cinema Canada: Do you still believe in what you called "production families"; do you still believe, as you once said, that that's the only solution to Quebec cinema?

Gilles Carle: I personally believe, as I always did, in small production teams, in production families. I always try to have my own. Apart from my personal talent, this is what helps me continue shooting. But the big mistake with beginning filmmakers is that they associate with people like themselves. You need a truck driver who prefers to carry sets than to carry coal, or an accountant who would like working with a theater group better than at Household Finance, you know. You need people like that. I have my own family, and they have been constantly working with me for ten years now. We need these small teams. The other day, I saw a group from the south-shore (of Montreal) getting lost in the corridors of the NFB, and I was disappointed. Why go to the Board? We must organize ourselves, find money, do new things, but many people are afraid of accountants. But accountants are your friends, you know; you must deal with them. The more you have production teams, the more cinematic freedom; it's simple. Because if I shoot alone, there isn't much cinema freedom. Everybody has to make a film.

But cinema is disappearing anyway. It's finished; now it's television, and I don't know what's going to happen. These electronic instruments are very costly, you know. Bill 109 on the cinema in Quebec, like every law, comes too late. Everything is changing now; we have pay-TV, and all that, and it's all under federal regulations. I don't know what's going to happen, really.

Cinema Canada: And what do you think about closing down the NFB, as recommended by the Applebaum-Hébert report?

Gilles Carle: Damn it! Let's open the NFB, not close it. Closing it is not the solution, we must open it to young filmmakers, to new artists, give them a chance to work. If we close the NFB, where will the beginning filmmakers do their first film? You know I started there. Some changes, many changes, have to be made in the structure of the NFB, of course. But the solution is to open the NFB, not to close it. All that would do is put more people on the unemployment rolls. And who needs that?

Richard Martineau ●

Gilles Carle's *Maria Chapdelaine*

Gilles Carle's new movie, *Maria Chapdelaine*, pushes all the right buttons to assure its success in Quebec, if nowhere else (in its first week alone, after opening Apr. 29, it brought in over \$190,000). Based on the 1913 novel of the same title by French expatriate Louis Hémon, the movie deals with the travails of a beautiful, taciturn, young woman trying to survive against all odds in the wilds of Lac St-Jean.

Quebec novelist Roch Carrier claims the novel has captured the Quebec imagination because it's not a work of precise ideas but rather what he calls "a vast emptiness" upon which readers can impose their own ideas or fantasies. Carle, working with a \$4.5-million budget, impose ideas all right – the virtues of obduracy ("j'y suis, j'y reste"), romanticization of alienation, *mon pays c'est l'hiver* and all that – and achieves a vast emptiness of his own: a hollow epic.

An overheated hack at the Montreal *Gazette* once called Carle's next-to-last film, *Les Plouffe*, Quebec's *Gone With the Wind*. This may mean that *Maria Chapdelaine* is our *Dr. Zhivago*, for all that that entails. There certainly is a lot of snow, and when there isn't, woods types pick blueberries and do countless other photogenic things, like walking by waterfalls or playing with the famille Chapdelaine's lovable mongrel.

The publicity material accompanying the movie makes a great deal of its authenticity and the difficulties the director faced in shooting four seasons in two months. It feels like Carle shot a lot more seasons than that, but then you tend to lose track after a while, as the authenticity marches steadily sideways toward nostalgia. (Why, by the way, did no one think to age the costumes? Were lumberjacks really this stylish?)

Carle came late to the project, the third in a series of directors hired to make both a theatrical feature and a four-hour mini-series for Radio-Canada (think of the seasons in store for us there). He and his co-scenarist, Guy Fournier, have been publicly squabbling about which man's interpretation of the novel is the more correct, but in all their ideological wrangling, they didn't get around to solving the central dramatic flaw: Maria and her dashing suitor, the aptly named François Paradis, are almost never on screen together. When they are, they mainly moon about: he asks her to wait for him, she says OK, he departs, and the rest of the movie she waits. And worse, we wait with her.

The casting of Nick Mancuso as Paradis goes a long way to making us under-



● Quebec's answer to *Dr. Zhivago*: Nick Mancuso and Carole Laure in *Maria Chapdelaine*

stand this wait: who wouldn't wait for him? He has such dash and sense of his own presence – he even stands out in long shots of crowd scenes – it's a shame all that's left for him to do is get lost in the snow. He's too well-coiffed for a bûcheron, but we can see the energy in him, the eagerness to do something, to make his part real, and that's so much more than can be said for most of the cast. There are at least a dozen acting styles going on here, running from pure maple-cured ham to *téléroman*-gothic, but then this is in keeping with the slapdash style of the whole project. There's no subtlety, no thought-out perspective. Nothing's left in the background for us to discover for ourselves, everything's dragged center-screen and klieg-lit, with Lewis Furey's incessant music providing the wholly unnecessary italics.

The darkly elegant Carole Laure plays Hémon's indomitable, homespun heroine. Laure and Carle have been working together for a long time now (*Fantastica*, *L'Ange et la femme*, *La tête de Normande St-Onge*, *La mort d'un bûcheron*), and it's time someone told them to cut it out: they're absolute poison for each other. Laure has revealed a flair for comedy with other directors (in Blier's *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs* and Joyce Bunuel's *Dirty Dishes*), but Carle doesn't seem to want her to act – he poses her. (Their previous collaborations have been notable for her nudity, so much so that local wags who saw the 1975 *La tête de Normande St-Onge* promptly renamed it *Les fesses de...*) For all the dramatic intensity he gets out of Laure's sophisticated, slightly ironic beauty, he might as well be shooting

magazine covers. In Carle's scheme of things, Laure is indomitable all right – indomitably chic. When she goes out to slop the hogs, that trademark blue-black hair sleeking down her slender back, her pancake applied to perfection, delectably soigne in that layered look so popular in the bush, it's the giddiest piece of miscasting since Marie-Antoinette played shepherdess at Versailles.

Will Aitken ●

MARIA CHAPDELAINE d. Gilles Carle
exec. p. Harold Greenberg p. Murray Shostak
Robert Baylis sc. Guy Fournier. Carle, based on the
novel by Louis Hémon d.o.p. Pierre Mignot art d.
Jocelyn Joly 2nd unit photography Richard Leis-
terman ed. Avde Chiriacff sd. eng. Patrick Rou-
seau p. man. Lorraine Richard head unit man.
Mario Nadeau 1st a.d. Jacques Wilbrod Benoit
prop. master Ronald Fauteux cost. des. Michele
Hamel head cost. dresser Blanche-Danielle Bou-
leau head make-up Micheline Forsy hair. Andre
Lafresniere cont. Ginette Senecal head elect.
Daniel Chretien head machinist François Dupere
sp. efx. John Thomas unit man. Ginette Guillard
public relations David Novek Associates Inc. unit
pub. Mark Lalonde stills Pierre Dury compt. Fred
Shacter p. acct. Carole Lagace p. sec. Micheline
Cadieux p. coord. In Montreal Marie-Hélène Roy
2nd a.d. Monique Maranda 3rd a.d. Jacques La-
berge asst. unit man. Louis-Philippe Rochon 1st
asst. cam. Jean Lepine 2nd asst. cam. Christiane
Guernon 3rd asst. cam. Nathalie Molliak-Visotsky
2nd unit asst. cam. Larry Lynn elect. Claude
Fortier. Robert Lapierre Jr. machinist Michel
Periard boom Veronique Gabillard asst. art d.
Raymond Dupuis props. Alain Singher asst.
props. Philippe Chevalier. Henri Gagnon. Jean
Labrecque. Josiane Noreau set dresser Patrice
Bengle 2nd set dresser Simon La Haye const.
Andre Bochu. Michel Bochu. Jean-Marie Vallerand.
Gaston Brassard head painters Robert Breton.
Rejean Paquin painters Guy Lalonde. Gilles Des-
jardins. Jean-Paul Montreuil sp. efx. asst. Bill Orr.
Ken Johnson sp. efx. Bob Baylis asst. cost. des.
Christiane Tessier. John Stowe asst. to cost. des.
Pierre Perrault cost. dresser Renee April make-
up Joan Isaacson p. asst. Michel Veillette. Andre
Ouellet. Angele Bourgault messengers Ellen
Berube. Alain Belhumeur drivers Pierre Guillard.
Sylvain Falardeau chief cook Kitty Baylis cook
Leo Evans asst. in kitchen Richard Carroll lp.
Carole Laure. Nick Mancuso. Pierre Curzi. Donald
Lautrec. Yolande Guenard. Annette Garneau. Ste-
phane Query. Guy Thauvette. Gilbert Sicotte. Jaser-
Anne Fortin. Louis-Philippe Milot. Gilbert Comtois.
Paul Berval. Claude Rich. Claude Lyrard. Domini-
que Briand. Marie Tifo. Jean-Pierre Masson. Angele
Arseneault. Jacques Thudale. Rod Tremblay. Claude
Pregent. Patrick Messe. Guy Godin. Denis Blais.
Michel Langem. Cedric Noel. Jose Ledoux. Renee
Girard. Roch Demers. Gilbert Moore. Gilles Val-
quette. Yvan Sarrazin. Rolland Beland. Michel Ri-
vard. Georges Levtchouk. Raul Duguay p.c. Astral
Film Productions Limited in collaboration with La
Societe Radio-Canada and TFI the first television
network of France colour 35mm running time
108 min

● *Maria Chapdelaine* gets strong acting assists from France's Claude Rich and Quebec's Marie Tifo



Canada at Cannes '83 :



The Year of the mole

● Illusions' end: Ann Hui's *Boat People* is a rough shocker about Vietnam today

by Marc Gervais

Last year's grimmest forebodings, sad to relate, have been surpassed by this year's reality; and it appears that, as a result, the Cannes Film Festival has been irreparably damaged, its spirit smothered in tons of concrete ugliness.

Thirty-six years ago, what was to become the world's biggest and best movie festival first began as a joyous get-together for the French and then was one long celebration of film art, spectacle, people; and the beauty of its setting guaranteed success. With success came growth. And further growth. A radical shift occurred when the Festival decided to become a Market as well: the event would never be the same. Business realities gradually took over; and managers and agents moved in on the person-

al side, dictating the course of events. The stars still came and went but under orders, reduced to essential commodities in the bartering of spectacle.

So the personal side suffered. The destruction of that aspect of the Festival became inevitable with the total televisioning of Cannes. Henceforth the electronic box would be boss, every event created, and validated by TV consumption. In previous years, to be sure, the photographers were apt to vulgarize any situation at any given moment, but never in terms of total control of the very nature of the thing itself.

The process of destruction, one is tempted to write, has been completed with the opening of the "Nouveau Palais." Contemporary architects, responsible for the obscenities which have defaced the Paris landscape (not to mention the Montreal Olympics debacle) have done it again. The loveliness of Cannes' bay, the result of the fusion of sun, sand, sea, sky, and mountain back-drop, is now scarred by the enormous new festival centre. Picture an immense, yellowish,

pink fortress straight out of Hollywood desert films of yore – and that is the good news! Inside, things get worse. The Cannes Film Festival now has the look and feel of a typical North American shopping centre. Electronic junk everywhere, escalators, bottle-necks, piped-in musical noise. Nature has been resolutely excluded, to be replaced by enormous indoor crowds enclosed in the barbaric dehumanization that passes for much of modern architecture – a veritable triumph of ugliness and spiritual stupor.

If anything of warmth, personality, soul or genuine *event* were left before the Nouveau Palais emerged, forget it now. Here is a Festival without a centre, without, yes, a soul. *Mediated* experience is the rule. No "real" reel events or people, but fragmented, mediated snippets, mass-manufactured, an appalling realization of the worst aspects of McLuhan's prophetic vision.

To say that the recent development is a disaster is merely to share in an amazingly unanimous consensus. And the result, in lived, individual personal

terms (as opposed to media representation) is palpable: the old Cannes crowd is lost, wandering up and down the Croisette, unsure where "everybody" is... over at the Carlton? or the old Palais? down at the over-crowded Majestic? or across the street in "the new Bunker" (as it is called with anything but affection)? The anger and frustration of the *festivaliers*, let it be noted, is only exceeded by that of the native Cannois.

Which is not to say that the movie event is no more, that Cannes is not swallowed up in the usual fever of film, film, film – on the market, in the official competition, in the parallel manifestations. Drove of airplanes, for example, still drag their banners across Cannes skies, announcing the Salkinds' forthcoming *Superman III*, *Supergirl*, and *Santa Claus*. James Bond is more in evidence than ever, still protecting the Croisette, still dominating the Carlton entrance (in his Roger Moore incarnation), but now also perched smiling atop the Majestic marquee (in his Sean Con-

Marc Gervais, CRTC commissioner and a member of the Communications department at Concordia University, is a regular contributor to *Cinema Canada*.

nery reincarnation). And the cocktails are de rigueur, the "starlets" still manage to be pursued by the photographers. Some things do not change...

Some thinks, perhaps. But other things do. Take the once splashy, energetic, vital Canadian presence. This year, one is tempted to refer to Cannes '83 as the Year of the Invisible Canadians. Or perhaps more accurately as the Year of the Mole.

Real moles, as we all know, live underground. And there we were – I mean the only official Canadian presence, i.e., the CFDC stand – buried in the basement of the Nouveau Palais among countless other scurrying, subterranean creatures. The dedicated CFDC denizens were coping as well as they could, in the circumstances to be sure. But the minimal data, limited services, and absence of promotion stand witness to an appalling come-down from the recent past, when Canada (whatever the criticisms, the hype for inferior products, what have you) served as a model for just how to be present at Cannes in order to help the cause of the Canadian feature industry.

No danger of any criticisms this year about our "excesses". While national groups like the Australians or New Zealanders, or independent big American companies, say, gave evidence of vitality, verve and Festival enthusiasm, Canada oscillated between Puritan austerity and pure no-show. Our Film Commissioner/head of the NFB was nowhere in evidence; and the CFDC chief was back home as well, working zealously on the modalities of how to administer Francis Fox's new production fund. More immediately glamorous presences (in the film sense) also were not in evidence – stars, directors, and the like. Canadian films received scarcely any publicity, there were no notable Canadian parties; indeed the Canadians in attendance were as scattered as the Festival itself.

All except Ontario, that is. That doughy province affirmed the Canadian fact (i.e., we exist) with a smashing good get-together, co-sponsored with the Toronto Festival of Festivals. The Quebec office had a few functions of its own, but the point here was that these were hardly Canadian events, right? And so what else is new...?

None of this is shattering, when stacked up against world starvation, nuclear arms races, pollution, the suppression of peoples. But given what Cannes is all about, and given the enormous gains of the past, one wonders why on earth we seem dedicated to throwing it all away. If you're going to do it, mate, you go all out, as our Aussie cousins say – and do.

The CFDC people explained courteously and patiently that there were no funds available, that there was no need of a splashy official presence as in the past, we had grown beyond that, and that, in any case, that was the way the independent Canadian producers preferred it.

Sure enough, Canadian producers were about, discreet in numbers and more discreet in how they appeared or how they displayed their treasures. John LeCarre has taught us that moles – the other kind – prefer not to have their true identity revealed. And so, the Canadian producers surfaced quietly. Apparently, there were some 25 features, of recent or not so recent vintage, to be seen one way or another. But their Canadian identity tended to be masked, packaged

as they were by American sellers such as Manson and Jensen Farley, in small semi-public or on-invitation-only showings.

Even so, *The Grey Fox* elicited some enthusiastic response in a sneak showing at the end, and *The Terry Fox Story* a more mixed reaction near the beginning of the festival. Two Québécois products actually made it, *sans* fanfare, to prestigious parallel events. Alas, Pierre Perault's *La bête lumineuse* proved disappointing, not to say downright false and pretentious, with nothing fresh to reveal. Brigitte Sauriol's *Rien qu'un jeu* is an honest and forthright treatment of a difficult subject (a father's sexual doings with his two daughters), but too often it slips into awkward dialogue, even bathos.

The business side, however, did occasion a lot of the usual activity – buying and selling, setting up projects and deals – even though Canadian distributors were looking more and more desperate as American majors or next-to-majors were gobbling up everything in sight with their new "classic" departments, and Canadian producers grow more and more frustrated in the face of often changing, often conflicting rules and procedures emanating from government agencies (DOC, CFDC, CBC, CRTC – you name em, we got 'em, and don't forget the provinces). Just to make sure that everyone stayed depressed, the rumours from back home were coming closer to reality: C Channel was closing down.

So the Canadian picture continues to be a desperately muddled one, needing far-reaching measures which spring from knowledge and experience. Given the profound contradictions within our system, perfect coherence in our policies is impossible. There will always be the odd Canadian film that enjoys enormous financial success at the expense of any Canadian cultural validity. And market demands, as presently understood and experienced, will continue to further the erosion. On the other hand, others will demonstrate that there is another possibility, that films can be popular and "genuinely Canadian". (Will *The Grey Fox* be one of these?)

On that inconclusive and fuzzy note, and having side-stepped mention of individual names and realities or engaging in any kind of nuanced discussion of the issues – totally beyond the limits of this report – one can end the Canadian chapter by stating quite simply that in many ways this was the least inspiring and most understated Canadian presence in Cannes in over 15 years.

The Cannes Film Festival, this May, 1983, however, was not just oppressive concrete and Canadian lack of verve. There were the films from all over the world; and even if no single movie was the occasion for rhapsodies of enthusiasm (such as *E.T.* last year), still there were plenty of interesting things to be experienced.

And that is inevitable, since Cannes has been entrenched for years as the world centre. For the Canadian critic, that means the opportunity, second to none, to get an over-view of what is happening world-side to film art, or to the film industry for that matter. Otherwise, what filters through to Canada is by and large via the funnel of New York critics' approval or American distributors' decisions – or the often laudable coups scored by our own film festivals; impressive, but not in any measure able to complete with Cannes.

More than ever for me, this year's Cannes festival was a hodge-podge of personal choices or guesses made from the official competition, the parallel events, and the Market (over three hundred films there alone). Over all, certain trends, and a few marvelous surprises.

The giants

The official competition, for example, acquired heavy artistic gravity with the presence of no less than three contemporary giants and all of them most difficult, most uncompromising of auteurs (the first two, by the way, shared the Best Director award). France's Robert Bresson presented *Argent* (Money), a ruthlessly austere study of evil (and grace) that pushes this most rigorous and severe of artists even further along

the closed system of his own intensely personal cinema. Not everyone's cup of tea, to be sure, and yet not as demanding – if that is the proper word – as the Russian Andrei Tarkovsky's Italian film, *Nostalghia*, surely the Festival's most impenetrable exploration of the human spirit, a poetic, suffering affirmation of human hope – and therefore in all likelihood not destined for distribution in North America. Ermanno Olmi, whom many consider the greatest of Italian film directors now working, came with his story of the Magi, *Cammina, Cammina* (Onward, Onward), not quite up to his Grand Prix winner of a few years ago (*The Tree of the Wooden Clogs*), but still a film master's glowing work of profound contemporary relevance.

And in the market one could see the latest works (if not their very best) of Ingmar Bergman (*Fanny and Alexander*), Andrzej Wajda (*Danton*, made in France), and Eric Rohmer (*Pauline on the Beach*). Here are examples of film masters in total control creating works that raise film unquestionably to the level of mature arts.

The light heavyweights

Not quite in that exalted company, yet enjoying a rich measure of world recognition, a number of other directors were in attendance with excellent films. Japan did well. Nagisa Oshima's *Merry Christmas*, Mr. Lawrence is a haunting study of military prison-camp life, far removed from Oshima's usual brilliant (and kinky) excesses. Shohei Inamura's *The Ballad of Narayama* actually won the Grand Prix for its splendid up-dating of the classic Japanese film of 25 years ago. Claude Goretta continues his intellectually rewarding exploration of life today with *The Death of Mario Rissi* (Switzerland), an agonized meditation on world starvation and racial tension. And Carlos Saura (Spain) gave Cannes one of its most popular films, a stirring, energetic, partly Flamenco version of Bizet's *Carmen*. Martin Ritt's *Cross Creek* (USA) a few notches lower because of its overdone lushness, nonetheless is a fascinating, lovely film about the novelist Marjorie Kinan Rawlings – and demonstrates again that an artist can be a

● A searing affirmation of human hope: dissident USSR director Andrei Tarkovsky's made-in-Italy film, *Nostalghia*



FESTIVALS

genuinely involved humanist and still thrive in Hollywood.

Unexpected joys

Perhaps the biggest bonus one can experience in Cannes film viewing is the surprise discovery of unheralded quality. A simple, unpretentious little Norwegian film, Knut Andersen's *Friends*, provides just that in a finely controlled story of some 12 year-olds trying to cope with their friend's alcoholic father – and without succumbing to sentimentality. At a much more ambitious level – and probably my most satisfying film viewing experience in Cannes '83 – was *Ascendancy*, written and directed by Edward Bennett, and produced by the British Film Institute for less (unbelievably) than three hundred thousand pounds. This re-creation of Belfast in the '20s version of the "troubles" offers startling confirmation that the British cinema is indeed experiencing a renaissance – and that it is possible to produce high quality films without going the bloated route of American distribution guarantees and all that *that* entails. Yet another "small" film was Ann Hui's *Boat People* (Hong Kong). Rough, unpolished, direct, it shocks the viewer with its depiction of conditions in South Vietnam under the present regime. And it is overwhelming in making us feel the flight of those who chose to be "boat people." Needless to add that certain Communist groups are not pleased with this one, destroying as it does, a myth still clung to by some.

The Aussies

My final candidate for the delightful surprise category has to be an Aussie film – and a surprise simply because most of the names were unknown to me. Or to put it in other words, the Aussies seem to come up with talent wave upon talent wave. Brilliantly acted by Lorna Lesley, Bill D. Kerr and John Jarratt, and (seemingly) effortlessly put together by producer Robert Bruning and director Howard Rubie, *The Settlement* makes no claims to high art. It is simply one of those thoroughly enjoyable, funny, touching little gems that delights its audience while hiding its immense intelligence and understanding of human nature and heart. All of which leads as inevitably to Australia and its peculiar interest for Canadian film folk (see Cinema Canada No. 94).

Whatever one may hear, the Australian film industry is *not* in a state of crisis; on the contrary, it is modestly thriving, and solid in its plans for the future. As I write this, the final amendments to the tax law (extending the 150% exemption over a two-year period) are being enacted. Now the Australians will be able to rationalize their output over an all-year-round production schedule. Moreover, four or five cases of entrepreneurial rip-off (as we Canadians put it) are being dealt with severely, so that the ranks of the perpetrators are being pruned. Pared down, that is, to the normal state of Australian film affairs, in which film people, really caring about products and knowing the intricacies of the art form and the business, are by and large in control.

Cannes was once again a showcase for good Aussie films. True, some big Aussie directors, having "succumbed" to the challenge of the Hollywood feature, presented American films: Fred Schepisi's disappointing, empty tour de force, a western called *Barbarosa*, and Bruce Beresford's superb *Tender Mercies*, are cases in point. But the home component in its genuine form still

thrives. Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously* was probably the best English-speaking film in competition. And the market offered such superior work as Peter Maxwell's *The Highest Honours*, and *Far East*, a fine contemporary thriller rich in insight and social involvement, by one of Australia's finest director/producer teams, John Duigan and Richard Mason.

So Australia goes on proving that a small country can do it. And it is one of the riches of the Cannes Film Festival that we are afforded the opportunity of witnessing just such a salutary phenomenon.

A few final comments more or less related to what has gone before.

1. Cannes has lost much with this final succumbing to gigantic size. The authorities, however, are already planning to solve the problems. With courage and some good hard thinking, it is conceivable that even the Bunker can serve, if it is integrated with a resurrected old Palais. The Festival could be made a place with space and with a more human pattern, a more gracious rhythm. It is possible, maybe.

2. Another pattern – this one a film production/distribution one – is clearly emerging. The general thinking now is that genuine co-production is the way of the future, the only way for European and other countries to avoid outright American control. And therein lies an incalculably important story, one of crucial interest to Canada, and a hopeful alternative, if correctly understood and resolutely put into practice.

3. Showbiz, hustling vulgarity, pollution, business, hype or whatever else – Cannes is increasingly all of this. And when one reports on the total impact, certain aspects tend to be neglected. For it is also at Cannes that Orson Welles presented a special award for creative artistry to a crusty, intransigent, 76-year-old film aristocrat named Robert Bresson. And where the mad Monty Python gang receives artistic recognition as well. And there are remarkable gestures, testifying of a profound awareness and solidarity. Andrei Tarkovsky, the brilliant director who is barely tolerated in the USSR by the regime, receives awards not only from the official Cannes jury but from the international critics and from the ecumenical juries as well. What this could mean for him, but also in terms of broader cultural possibilities, is incalculable. And Cannes remembers its past. Beautifully restored prints of great, sometimes neglected, films of the past are regularly shown. Books are honored. In a special ceremony, the young American film scholar, Dudley Andrew, and François Truffaut and others, gathered to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the death of one of film history's greatest and most beautiful thinkers, André Bazin, father, in a sense of *Les cahiers du cinéma* and of *la nouvelle vague*. Cannes is all of this as well.

4. The final, final word. We are not living at a time when film art is being renewed. There are no startling new developments, and Cannes made this abundantly clear. As indicated earlier, there was not even a single acclaimed "masterpiece" in evidence. On the other hand, a number of serious, excellent films witness to a growing outrage at the folly and evil of today's power game. Cannes showed us an art form that is rich in conscience and consciousness.



● Flamboyant Flamenco steals a scene in Carlos Saura's *Carmen*



● David Bowie adds his androgynous touch to Nagisa Oshima's *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*



● Martin Ritt's *Cross Creek* proves one can have a soul and still earn a living in Hollywood

At times, the cry borders on cosmic despair; but there is an amazingly strong assertion repeated time and again, calling for respect for human dignity, and, indirectly at least, expressing a hope that concerted human effort is possible.

This may not be the reason most folk

go to the movies back home, but that was a dominant tone in many of the major works shown in Cannes this May.

So, yellowish-pink Bunkers not withstanding, maybe it is still worth the effort after all.

The word, the flesh and the films of David Cronenberg

by John Harkness



Let's talk about evil. In the horror film, there are basically two kinds of evil, with characters and actions falling on a continuum between interior evil and exterior evil. Interior evil is that created within characters (Norman Bates in *Psycho*, the shape in *Halloween*) as a result of warps in their psychological makeup or because of their relationship with society. Exterior evil is an outside force which attacks what Robin Wood would no doubt refer to¹ as the bourgeois patriarchal normalcy of our society – the devil invading Regan in *The Exorcist* is a good example, as are the vampires in any given version of *Dracula*, or the space spores in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (either version).

When critics treat the films of David Cronenberg, however, they generally make a singular error in confining his films to the realm of the horror film, which limits the approach one can take by ignoring their most important element: that of science fiction. Admittedly, this is easy to do, because examples of true science fiction films have become increasingly rare in the past two decades, and the boundaries have never been exactly clear (*The Andromeda Strain* and *THX 1138* are almost the only pure science fiction films of recent years that come to mind) and while a film like *Alien* is marketed as science fiction, its horror element outweighs the science element almost two to one.

What is important about the science fiction element is that the scale of evil in science fiction films is not the continuum from interior evil to exterior, but from accidental to intentional. Did the mad scientist create a human being (*Frankenstein*) or did he create a monster (later versions of the same story, when the creature loses his speech and his innate decency), and which did he mean to create?

Thus Robin Wood's consignment of Cronenberg's films to the category of "reactionary" horror films², based on

what he calls Cronenberg's "sexual disgust" and "the projection of horror and evil onto women and their sexuality" misses the point almost entirely, because he is dealing with Cronenberg in the same terms as Wes Craven and George Romero – as a horror-filmmaker who attempts to examine the nature of society's structure and its dehumanizing of the individual.

If I take issue with Robin Wood, it is less out of dislike (Wood, with a group of like-minded fellows – Andrew Britton, Richard Lippe, and Tony Williams, most of whom studied with Wood at some point – is one of the few major critics to examine the subterranean side of the American cinema represented by exploitation filmmakers like Romero and Craven) than resentment of the way his quintessentially ideological approach to the contemporary cinema acts as a strait-jacket on the films he examines. Politically

correct filmmakers who attack the notions of bourgeois normality (Craven, Romero, Tobe Hooper, Stephanie Rothman) are by definition better than conservative directors like Brian De Palma and David Cronenberg, who by almost any critical standard are better filmmakers than the aforementioned directors.

Wood and company operate within a critical system that acts to limit their viewpoint to issues that deal with repression of alternative forms of sexual and moral expression in the structure of contemporary capitalist society.

It is significant that these concerns emerged in Wood's criticism after he came out of the closet (in the London Times Educational Supplement in 1974) with his own gayness, for it is possible to argue seriously that Wood was a better critic when he was repressing his homosexuality. His books on Hawks, Bergman and Hitchcock are classics of bourgeois

humanist criticism (using neither of these terms pejoratively), whereas the tone of his more recent work suggests that we should ignore that earlier phase of his criticism because it was presented to us under false pretences.

The ideological tunnel-vision of Robin Wood ignores the component of science in Cronenberg's work and it is the science element that lifts the director's work above the realm of the exploitation horror film. There is furthermore a darkly Cronenbergian irony to what Wood once wrote about *Shivers*, ("a film singlemindedly about sexual liberation, a prospect it views with unmitigated horror... The release of sexuality is linked inseparably with the spreading of venereal disease"³) now that the most explosive liberation of sexual energy of recent years, in the gay world, has been linked to the spreads of AIDS and Kaposi's Sarcoma (known as "gay cancer").

What I hope to do here is examine the relationship between the two types of evil engendered by the marriage of science fiction and horror, the role of science, and the function of the victims in the cinema of David Cronenberg, particularly the way that Cronenberg's thematic has evolved in terms of the intentionality of the science fiction films from experimentation to accident, from specific to general malaise within the films themselves and within the oeuvre.

The road to Hell is paved with good intentions

It is worth noting that there are very few outright villains in the cinema of David Cronenberg. Dr. Emile Hobbes, who creates the parasites in *Shivers*, is attempting to break down the barriers in man, "an over-intellectual creature who has lost touch with his body." When he realizes what he has done, he commits suicide. Dr. Lawrence Kelloid, who performs the skin grafts that become much, much more in *Rabid*, is attempting to save the life and beauty of that film's heroine, who has been horribly burned in a motorcycle accident. *The Brood's* psychotherapist, Dr. Hal Raglan, is attempting to get his patients



● Invasion of privilege: *The Brood* was Cronenberg's version of the whitebread melodrama

John Harkness is the film critic of Toronto's *NOW* magazine, and a regular contributor to Cinema Canada.

to bring out their repressions and terrors into a physical manifestation that can be cured, removing the neuroses. Dr. Paul Ruth had no idea that he would be creating a generation of *Scanners* when he invented his tranquilizer ephemerol.

With the exception of *Videodrome*, which we will deal with later, the villains in Cronenberg's films are not his scientists, but outsiders to the central worlds of the characters – *Scanners'* Keller, who is collaborating with the Scanner underground for his own power; *Fast Company's* corporate manager, who fails to understand the obsession with speed that powers his drivers; the collector in the short film, *The Italian Machine*, who buys a phenomenal motorcycle then puts it in his living room as an objet d'art. The crime in all these films is not ambition as much as it is stupidity.

The problem with intelligence, of course, is that it is human, and thus limited. The failure of the majority of Cronenberg's scientists is that all the implications of everything they do is never quite apparent. Unlike, say, a computer with a chess program, they cannot work out all the implications of each move.

Cronenberg has said that "I make no attempt to say that scientists go too far. I'm very ambivalent about the ecology



● The body invaded in *Shivers*

movement, for instance. It's not at all clear to me that the natural environment for man is the woods – for all we know, it could be downtown Chicago. The thing about man, the unique thing, is that he creates his own environment. It's in his nature to try to take control of it away from chance. So in a sense, my doctors and scientists are all heroes. Essentially, they're symbolic of what every human tries to do when he brushes his teeth."

The irony, of course, is that chance cannot be controlled, and it is the accident that defeats human intelligence in every one of his films. The distance between what Cronenberg says his films are about (the intentional fallacy) and what people perceive them as is immense. Were the people in *Starliner* apartments (in *Shivers*) better off as repressed zombies in a sterile planned environment or are they better off as crazed sexual zombies in the throes of an orgiastic hunger? Cronenberg views the spread of the parasites in that film as liberating. Yet the predatory sexuality of the various victims is presented in terms of the classic horror film, as if proving the dictum to be found on the wall of the doctor who is one the film's centres of sanity ("Sex is the invention of a very clever venereal disease").

Rose in *Rabid* is a zombie in a different sense, for she has almost literally been

resurrected from the dead by a team of dedicated surgeons. The scientific explanation of the strange new organ she develops – a syringe in the armpit that draws blood from her victims and leaves them carrying a virulent form of rabies – is one of Cronenberg's great coups in scientific terms. When Rose receives skin grafts, the graft tissue is rendered morphogenetically neutral (all tissue is the same tissue), assuming that the body will absorb the tissue into its biosphere, ignoring the fact that in intensive care, the body is operating under a different system (being fed on plasma) and that the grafts may absorb the body into a new ecology.

In *Shivers* and *Rabid*, both the "villains" and the "victims" (both terms are to be used with extreme care) are unwitting. The scientific intervention is a physical invasion that effects the brain. When they realized the nature of their actions – Dr. Hobbes in *Shivers* and Rose in *Rabid* – the effect is to kill them, because both commit suicide. The message is quite plain: knowledge kills.

It is reflected very plainly in the straightforward style of the two films. These are not horror films that relish dark corners and lurking menace, but rigidly controlled frames and tautly Apollonian environments – sterile modern apartment buildings and hospitals, and clean, Canadian shopping centres and subways. In an American horror film, it is not at all surprising to find slashers stalking 42nd Street or wolves in the South Bronx, for these are deranged environments, decaying and corrupt. The high-tech beauty of Cronenberg's environments are logical monuments to clarity and order, and the eruptions of madness and disease in these regions is much more shocking. Even his casting of Marilyn Chambers in *Rabid* reflects this ambition, for Chambers, who is all muscle and sinew, is the most high-tech of all the porn queens, a product of self-design (clearly a lady who spends a lot of time in the gym). The film would have been very different had he been allowed to follow his original casting of Sissy Spacek in the lead.

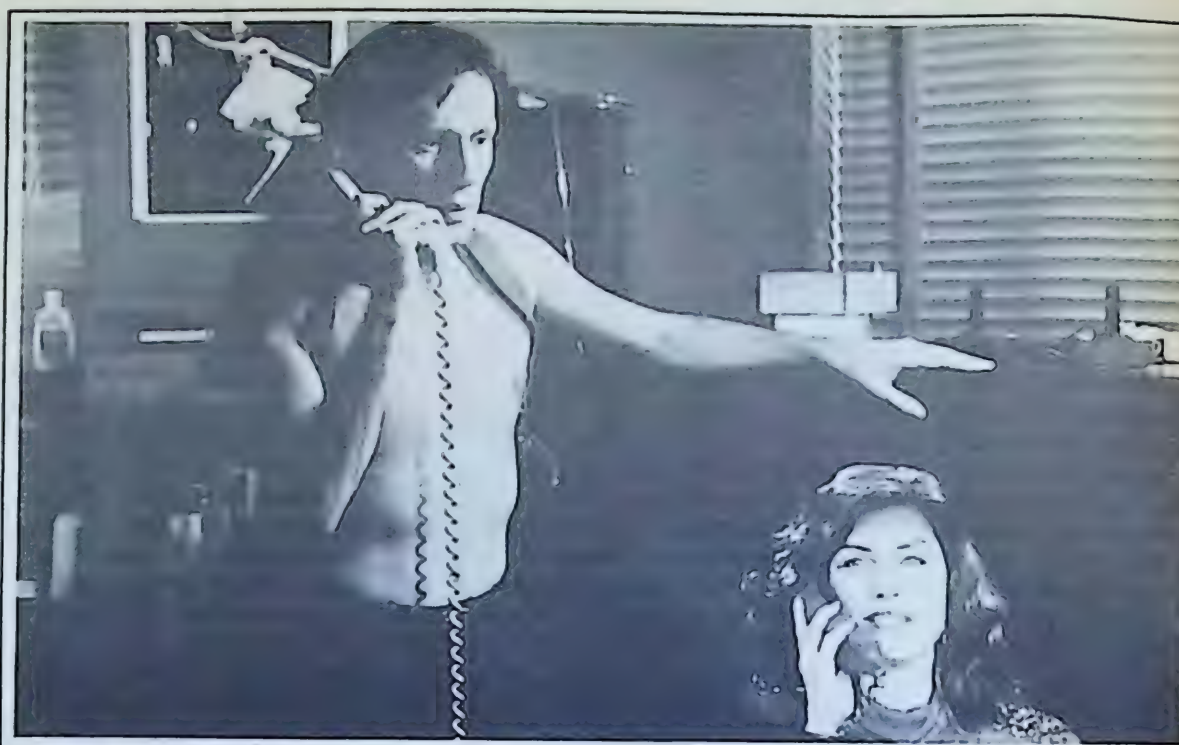
Children of rage

The relationships in *Scanners*, *The Brood* and *Stereo* reverse the terms of *Shivers* and *Rabid* in two major ways.

First, the films move from the relative freedom of the rootless characters of *Shivers* and *Rabid* into the heart of the basic unit of our society – the family. Second, the emphasis shifts almost diametrically from the effects of the body on the mind to the effects of the mind on the body.

Almost as important, there is a shift in the type of science involved. Dr. Raglan in *The Brood* and Dr. Ruth in *Scanners* do not intervene nearly as radically in the biology of the human body as do their predecessors (*Stereo*, Cronenberg's first, experimental, feature film, is somewhat different, and is included in this discussion as it stands as a rough draft of *Scanners*). There is no surgery in *The Brood* and *Scanners*. Both films deal with a sort of telepathic murder – directly in *Scanners* and by a secondary agent in *The Brood*.

The Brood is Cronenberg's version of the whitebread melodrama (he has described it as his own version of *Kramer vs. Kramer*), and the genre is concerned with the violation of privileged middle-class space by unbearable emotions, usually centred on the loss and recovery of a child (cf. *Ordinary People*, *Without*



● The image invades the mind: James Woods and Deborah Harry in *Videodrome*

a *Trace*, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, *Table for Five*).

As a psychiatrist, Dr. Hal Raglan is doing exactly what he is supposed to do; that is, help people bring out their repressed emotions and conflicted desires. His tragedy is that he succeeds all too well, and as one of the few characters in Cronenberg's work to suffer from hubris, he has no idea of when to stop. When confronted with mad Nola Carveth, whose husband has institutionalized her because he fears for the safety of their daughter, he uncovers the bruised, violent soul of a child abused by her mother and ignored by a weak, ineffectual father. While his other patients remain attached to their violent neuroses – one develops a series of welts on his body, another a set of lymphic enlargements that dangle from his neck like the wattles of a turkey – Nola is his prize patient, because she produces actual children, monstrous simulacra without retinæ, teeth, speech, sexuality or navels. They are, quite literally, manifestations of her rage (they are short-lived) who are connected to her not by an umbilical cord, but by a mental link that directs them against those she sees threatening her – her mother and father, a pretty school teacher her husband

finds attractive, and ultimately her doctor.

There has been research on the effects of the emotion on our physical beings – calmness and tranquility seem to be related to longevity almost as surely as natural foods and physical exercise – thus *The Brood* has a beautiful perverse logic. If a healthy mind can help the maintenance of a healthy body, cannot the forcing of sick emotions to the surface cause physical changes?

Yet Dr. Raglan is not the villain of the piece. The villain is Nola's own family and the uncomprehending decency of her husband, whose job is restoring old homes (a nicely pointed bit of symbolism). In *The Brood*, science is only able to discover and awaken monsters – the seeds are planted deep within the characters themselves, and Nola contains so many seeds that only death can cure her. *The Brood* demonstrates the way that the family can serve as a source of evil and delusion (as Nola's mother remarks, "Thirty seconds after you're born you have a past, and sixty seconds after, you start lying to yourself about it").

Like most of the characters in *The Brood*, *Scanners'* Dr. Paul Ruth is a master of self-deception, believing that



● The Invasion of the flesh: In *Scanners* Louis Del Grande's head blows up

the generation of superhuman telepaths created by his sedative ephemerol (designed for pregnant women) are capable of creating an era of a new renaissance in human society.

He simultaneously gathers unto himself the guilt of having created them, clutching it to himself like a treasure. He seems to ignore the strong possibility that the Scanners may not have been created by ephemerol, but were, like Nola Carveth's monsters, released by his action. It is no accident that the beginning of the "scan tone" heard on the soundtrack when one of the Scanners unleashes his power sounds uncannily like the creaking open a huge iron door, suggesting that, when the Scanners were created, it was not a deformation of the brain that created their power, but the unlocking of a cerebral region that is not part of the ten percent normally used by human beings.

In a very real sense, both Cameron Vale and Darryl Revok in *Scanners* and *The Brood* are children of rage, one set released chemically and the other through pure mental coercion. This is quite different from the artificial telepaths in *Stereo*, who were created surgically and locked into symbiotic and intense telepathic relationships during their stay at the Canadian Academy for Erotic Research, where Luther Stringfellow's motto is "If there can be no love between the researcher and the subject, there can be no experiment."

Intriguingly, the created telepaths in both films develop pathological symptoms – an inability to deal with the flood of information received by their minds and a tendency towards self-destruction (both Darryl Revok and one of the telepaths in *Stereo* drilled holes in their foreheads to relieve the pressure created by having all those voices in their heads).

Of course, Dr. Ruth is not merely a metaphoric father to Vale and Revok, but their literal father (in the absence of a physically present mother, his oddly bi-sexual name with its masculine pre-name and feminine surname, suggest that they were not mothered at all, the same way that Nola Carveth's brood has no literal father), their competition is not merely between the dream and the nightmare of a Scanner society, but shot through with sibling rivalry and an increasingly Oedipal relationship with the father. In addition, Ruth's association with the Scanner program at Comsec suggests a domineering father unwilling to admit to the adulthood of his children, and thus Revok's rebellion is as Oedipal an action as Nola Carveth's responsibility for the death of her own mother (who is responsible for Nola's rage, in an endless circle of guilt).

The sleep of reason breeds monsters – and in *Shivers*, *Rabid*, *The Brood* and *Scanners*, the monsters function in a world of appetite, desire and murder that is the absolute reverse of the rationality that led to their creation.

Yet from these films, it is difficult to understand in precisely what direction Cronenberg is moving. His overtly Cartesian concerns, and his fascinated horror at the spectacle of physical decay are quite evident. While the technological aspect of scientific intervention is present, it is not nearly as evident as it will become in his most recent film, *Videodrome*, which finally comes face to face with the concern that is at the heart of Cronenberg's world – the interface between the human and the inhuman, between biology and other sciences.



● The body as high-tech: Marilyn Chambers in *Rabid*

The evolution of man as a technological animal: *Videodrome*

If *Videodrome* is David Cronenberg's masterpiece, it is because its narrative confusion and profusion conceals a driven, inexorable logic. Max Renn, a Toronto television entrepreneur with a taste for the bizarre (mostly prime-time sex and violence), discovers a strange television program that features nothing but torture and murder emanating from Pittsburgh. He assigns his in-house video pirate, Harlan, to discover the location of the signal and a sales agent to buy it.

What he does not realize is that implanted in the signal is an encoded message that works directly on his brain, leading to massive, hyperrealistic hallucinations and, eventually, physical mutation.

Investigating, he discovers a set of interlocking conspiracies involving *Videodrome* (the program) which is attempting to re-order the morality of society, and a counter-conspiracy led by Bianca O'Blivion (daughter of Brian O'Blivion, who created *Videodrome*), attempting to liberate society and move man into a higher state of evolution through integration with the machinery and content of television.

Locked inside what Cronenberg has called the "paranoid inventiveness" of Max Renn, we watch as he may or may not commit murder, may or may not commit suicide, may or may not have a video program inserted into a strange, vagina-like organ that develops in his stomach.

The inexorable logic of *Videodrome* is that the illusion is the reality, and when dealing with a medium as insidious as television, it doesn't make any difference which is which. One can interpret the narrative in any way, and find no textual

clues to deny it. Is Nikki Brand, the radio personality with whom Renn falls in love, an agent or a victim of *Videodrome*? Is Bianca O'Blivion an enemy of *Videodrome* or part of a struggle for power within the conspiracy who is using Renn to eliminate her rivals?

David Cronenberg Filmography

Shorts

Transfer 16 mm color

From the Drain 16 mm color

The Italian Machine

Secret Weapons

Features

Stereo (1969) 65 min. 35 mm B & W

Crimes of the Future (1970) 65 min. 35 mm color

Shivers (1975) 35 mm. 87 min. p.c. Dal Productions Can. dist. Cinépix (US title: *They Came From Within*; Quebec title: *The Parasite Murders*)

Rabid (1976) 35 mm, 90 min. dist. Cinépix

Fast Company (1978) 35 mm. 93 min. p.c. Michael Leibowitz sc. Cronenberg with Phil Savath. Courtney Smith

The Brood (1979) 35 mm p.c. Mutual Films/Elgin International dist. New World-Mutual (Can), New World Pictures (US)

Scanners (1980) 35 mm. 105 min. p.c. Filmplan International dist. New World-Mutual (Can), Avco Embassy (US)

Videodrome (1981) 35 mm. 88 min. p.c. Filmplan Int'l dist. (Can., US & Eng.) Universal Pictures.

Max Renn's suicide – the final scene of the film – is equally ambiguous. What leads him to suicide is the promise of rebirth into a more highly evolved state (the next stage in the evolution of man as a technological animal) but there is no guarantee, which suggests that Renn, whose dying words are "Long live the new flesh," may be the first martyr of a new religion.

One of the most interesting elements of *Videodrome* is the fact that while there is overtly evil activity for the first time (Barry Convex and Harlan are explicitly turning Max into a monster that they can direct), it is also the first time that the victim is a witting accomplice in his own destruction. Were Max Renn not interested in the pornographic violence that his television station peddles to the public, he would not be hooked into the *Videodrome* signal. Were he not fascinated by the changes happening in his own body, he would not continue to view the signal. While his first murders, those of his partners, is done under the compulsion of *Videodrome*, his second murders, of Harlan and Convex, are committed as acts of vengeance.

Despite its narrative and moral confusion, *Videodrome* serves to clarify the relationships of science to man, destruction and creation, man and society in the works of Cronenberg. There is little of good and evil in the world. There is accident and evolution, whereby creation can become destruction, villains become victims (often the first victims), and victims can turn the tables with frightening suddenness.

The linkage between science and evil is a perverse one, almost entirely separate from intention, and society is less important by far than individual morality. What anti-Cronenbergians, who attack his films on social grounds, fail to see is that his work is not so much about present society and its discontents but about alternative social structures based on our world.

It is an essentially visionary world that would be capable of arising from our own, and while Cronenberg publicly expresses his belief in man as a technological animal, (the bloody fear and mutant desires of the films are deeply ambivalent towards these changes). Science can create (or unleash) a new race of beings without knowing what those beings are capable of – and unaware of the potentials of that race for self-destruction. It is a world fully cognizant that every human endeavour, every human institution, and every human relationship is a two-edged sword, and that good turns to destruction in a blink of the eye. Cronenberg's *New World* is a world that reflects the incoherence of reality (explain, if you disagree, the logic to be found in mass murder, nuclear weapons, starvation, television, and bureaucracy) and thus strikes at the very heart of the way our world works. ●

Notes

The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following people and organizations for providing the opportunity to review the films of David Cronenberg in the preparation of this article: Susan Kennedy of the Canadian Film Development Corporation, Admit One Video, Debi Weldon of New Cinema, Ilona Pokol of Cineplex Corp., and Virginia Kelly of United Artists Classics.

1. In Andrew Britton, Richard Lippe, Tony Williams, and Robin Wood *The American Nightmare: Essays On the Horror Film*, Toronto, 1979.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 24
3. *Ibid.*

A *20th Century Chocolate Cake* is not a conventional Canadian feature film. It is a bizarre comedy about the absurdities of the 20th century where dreams don't come true. It revitalizes contemporary clichés and creates a recipe for the future. I produced, directed and edited the film. Gregory Van Riel wrote the screenplay, acted the lead role and co-produced the picture.

The docu-drama includes interviews with Montreal gossip columnist Thomas Schnurmacher; feats of strength by The Great Antonio, a 510-pound mass of raging man; a secretary who Xeroxes herself; a giant rabbit that dodges cars; an authentic male belly dancer; and anti-romance.

Essentially Greg and I put the film together with very little money. We recruited friends and friends of friends to shoot the entire film, which was shot on weekends and during summer months.

I met Greg at John Abbott College where I teach film and English and Greg was trying to be a student; in the '70s neither of those occupations was easy. Greg wasn't the typical John Abbott student. He was more aggressive, independent and less controllable. I found these traits attractive and took up the challenge of trying to work with him. We made a first "dramatic" film entitled *Recipe to Cook a Clown*, a rather loose scenario featuring Greg and Charles Fisch, Jr., another former student of mine. The film consisted of a series of vignettes—Greg meeting bizarre people in the city, a favorite theme of mine.

Somehow, we forgot the pain of making our first drama and decided to create another. Greg came up with a story about this schized-out 20th-century youth who goes around the city with a tape recorder interviewing people on the street. I loved the idea of interviewing people candidly. The most spontaneous material came from children: there's a revealing sequence where a four-year-old boy tells us his father is in jail—suddenly his sister clobbers him with her fist, and he quickly changes his story saying Daddy is in the South; obviously, just what he was told to say.

By now we were hooked. We had edited about 20 minutes of really interesting documentary footage, but there still wasn't a coherent story.

Greg would write all day and drive taxi at night, while I'd teach school during the day, then edit at night. At about 12 midnight we'd meet at a bar downtown to discuss the scenes and

Montreal filmmaker Lois Siegel is currently scripting, with Gregory Van Riel, the sequel to A 20th Century Chocolate Cake, A 21st Century Lobotomy. She is also shooting a half-hour documentary on Albinos.



The baking of a chocolate cake

by Lois Siegel

plan the next weekend's shoot. We enlisted Charles Fisch, Jr. from *Recipe* to play an alter-ego to Greg, as well as the very charismatic Jeannine Laskar, who had never acted in films before, to play a mysterious lady.

One night I received a strange call in

broken English with an Italian accent: "Gregory, he in jail." I freaked out—we were to shoot the next day, and Greg was in the scene. "Where?" I shouted in panic. "Gregory, he said you would know." And the lady hung up. I spent the next four hours on the phone calling

every jail in the city trying to find Greg. Finally I reached him. "Greg, what happened?" "Oh, they picked me up for an expired taxi license. I'll be out by tomorrow—I'm having a great time. There's all these weird people in here. I'm interviewing them, doing research..."

Despite tremendous efforts to finish the film, *A 20th Century Chocolate Cake*, started in 1978, was still being shot in 1980. One of the most elaborate scenes involved PJ's Cabaret, one of the more liberal-minded bars in the city—a place where both gays and straights mingle without hostility. M.C. Armand Monroe was fantastic in helping us achieve an authentic look. The week before we shot, he announced to the regular clientele that we were in pursuit of extras for the film. People from all over the city showed up at 8 a.m. Sunday morning to be in the scene: rockers, a leather man, punks, the Queen of England—it looked like Halloween. One girl was even let out of Douglas Hospital for the day to be in the film, and stripper Fonda Peters showed up practically naked. (She subsequently became Linda Lee Tracy of *Not A Love Story* fame).

Our new cameraman that day, Peter Benison, who actually was a real cameraman, shooting normal features and commercials, flew in from Toronto at the last minute for the PJ's shoot. Peter had been in Toronto shooting *Death Ship* the day before and had missed his plane back to Montreal. The only flight available was to Ottawa where he prearranged to rent a car when the plane arrived at 1 a.m. But when Peter landed in Ottawa, there was no car and the rental office was closed, shut tight for the night. Wisely, Peter had written down the name of the owner of the rental office and after waking up half of Ottawa asking for a Mr. Johnson, Peter finally found him (imagine calling anyone after 9 p.m. in Ottawa) and coaxed the man, with the threat of ruining a multi-million dollar picture, to get out of bed and come down to the airport and give him a car.

It was 5 a.m. when Peter arrived in Montreal... and he was on the set two hours later. We pried his eyes open, fed them some coffee and glued them to the camera eyepiece. Then Peter proceeded to shoot one of the most superb scenes in *Chocolate Cake*.

Charles did his belly dance, and I post-dated some cheques into oblivion so we could look at the rushes. Bellevue Pathe Laboratory was great. Everytime a cheque would bounce they'd merely call me, and I'd post-date a few more cheques. I was always about three months behind.

Then Greg came into an inheritance—a "Flower-Powered Geek Mobile." Scriptwriter Edith Rey (*Babe, The Armoured Man*) had been working on the film

Tomorrow Never Comes, directed by Peter Collinson. As a going away present Edith was given the car which was completely covered with painted daisies. Greg took one look at the car and flipped: "I gotta have that car for our movie!" Edith gave him the car. So now we had a car covered with daisies. People looked at us like we were crazy as we did highway shots and stunts: the Geek in the country, the Geek in the city, the Geek in the morning, the Geek at night, the Geek going the wrong way on the Trans-Canada Highway service road, dodging shocked little red Volkswagens...

I only spent money on film stock and processing and hustled everything else. I took care of equipment, crew and transportation. Greg took care of actors, accessories and locations. Every week Greg would approach another delicatessen on Ste. Catherine Street for catering so that we could feed our crew. We'd trade a credit in the film for food, props and beer. Our credit list is about five miles long, not unlike that in *Superman*. Greg would often secure a location by offering the manager of the place a part in the film.

By the end of the shoot we had used 10 cameramen, 10 sound men, 10 different cameras, and most of the film was shot on outdated 'short ends' - some only 40 feet long. Once I received some outdated film from a group of women who wanted to make a porno film, but who never got around to it...

We got to the point where we'd offer assistant cameramen the honor and opportunity of shooting part of our film if they would supply the film stock. I'd often find film cans pushed through the mail slot when I awoke in the morning.

Then we scripted an insane skit in a gas station with Stephen Lack and Peter Brawley of *Montreal Main* and *Rubber Gun* fame. Brawley played a vindictive mechanic who completely dismantles Stephen's handsome car. We interviewed Thomas Schnurmacher about why people love gossip, then we added The Great Antonio (one of Montreal's famous street people, renown for pulling four busses at a time on chains through downtown). Enlisting The Great Antonio's services was not an easy task. He didn't have a phone and could only be reached by leaving a message at the restaurant where he had breakfast. After weeks of calling, we arranged to meet him at his apartment in Montreal East to try to convince him to be in our film. He wasn't very impressed by us because there weren't any real 'super stars' in *Chocolate Cake*.

He pulled out hundreds of photos of himself posing with famous stars: snaps of him hovering over Alain Delon, Liza Minelli, Lee Majors, etc. He wouldn't appear in a film unless there was a big star featured. Finally I said, "O.K., listen. Tom Jones is in tonight. If I take a picture of you with Tom Jones, will you be in our film". Antonio said, "What do you want me to do?" We filmed him the next day.

Broke again. I applied for a couple more charge cards and put all my cash into the film. Then I figured out how to obtain two Master Cards. By this time I had started another film: a documentary entitled *Extreme Close-Up*, about multi-handicapped, young adults who have one handicap in common - blindness. Since I was putting money into two films, my funds were low. Eventually Master Card discovered my two accounts and blew their top. I spent one whole day answering hysterical phone calls



● Dance of the veils: Linda Lee Tracy (aka Fonda Peters) in a scene from *Chocolate Cake*

because their system had gone wrong, and no one could cope with the idea of a customer having two cards under the same name. Finally a guy from the head office called me at school, and we had a great conversation. I explained to him how anything was possible within a large system - the larger the easier, and I taught him how to obtain two accounts. Then I told him about my films and said I would send him a cheque immediately, but by the end of the conversation everything had reversed, and he told me not to worry, everything was all right, I didn't have to send him any money...

The second summer was almost over, but we still had a few shots left to shoot with the Geek mobile. Unfortunately, the car brakes had given out - so Greg approached stuntman Marcel Fournier about fixing the car. Fortunately, Marcel just happened to be looking for such a crazy car. He was hired to perform the stunts for CTV's *National Driving Test* and needed a 'punk car.' We traded it for a brake job. Marcel fixed the brakes, we

shot the next day and delivered the car that night to Bienville, Quebec. Then Greg and I were hired to play the parts of punk kids who get smashed up in the punk car in *National Driving Test*. It was the first time I saw myself killed on television.

Next, we got the idea of having a rough-tough motorcycle lady pick up Charles who was hitchhiking in one scene. But where do you find motorcycle 'Hells-Angels' type ladies?

Greg and I went down to the tough side of town - Pointe St. Charles - and discovered a bike shop on Wellington Street. Looking like the Bobbsey Twins on Sunday, we smiled at several mean-looking characters who were polishing their brass knuckles and omnivorous tattoos. We asked whether they knew any motorcycle ladies. Surprisingly, they kindly made a phone call and within a half-hour, up pulled the biggest purple Harley-Davidson we'd ever seen in our lives - driven by our motorcycle lady. Everything was set. The day of the shoot

she brought her boyfriend, "Tiny," along. He was about 6'5" and as wide as he was tall. His Harley Davidson made his girlfriend's bike look like a tricycle. He watched over the production to see that we didn't take advantage of his lady, and we tried to keep from looking scared.

Everyone we knew became an extra in *Chocolate Cake*. When a crew member wasn't shooting, he was enlisted as an actor. It was like musical chairs. Everyone constantly changed roles. During one scene the electrician became the assistant director, the soundman helped with the lighting. I set up the tripod, and everyone was constantly over-involved and therefore happy. Sometimes people would even cancel their paying jobs to work with us. If an extra ended up on the cutting-room floor, we'd try to use that person in another scene at a later date.

Filmmaking became a way of life. We were so involved that sometimes we lost sight of what was happening. For instance, Greg wrote a scene about the main character of *Chocolate Cake* who decided to be a dog trainer. The scene included an encounter with a ferocious, man-eating German Shepherd. That was before he found himself on location playing the part of that guy. When he saw the huge, growling beast tearing and tugging at the strong leather leash of the trainer, he definitely had second thoughts about acting at that moment.

But we always went ahead anyway. Logic and reason weren't in the script, and we certainly weren't going to write them in.

By now we were into year three, and all those little details that crop up when re-shooting a film had to be straightened out. Haircuts had to match, weight had to be lost or gained. The dry cleaners lost a pair of pants from Greg's wardrobe, and somehow we had to find a matching pair that belonged to a suit which was bought in Nairobi, Kenya. Montreal shopkeepers told us to forget it.

Then I read this lovely story in a newspaper about a secretary who Xeroxed her rear-end for a party invitation and was consequently fired. Of course, I had to recreate the scene for *Chocolate Cake*.

Filmplan International Inc., a company which makes features, agreed to let us use their Xerox machine on a Saturday morning. We never had so many requests to work on a scene.

Then we arranged to shoot a fight scene at a heavy bar near St. Lawrence Street. We got permission to shoot on a Sunday, and O'Keefe donated about 15 cases of beer for the cast and crew. But the barman decided to make some extra cash and started selling the free beer to all the extras. By the time we needed the extras for the fight scene, everyone was drunk. The bartender had been drinking for 12 hours when it came time for him to say his lines. His contribution to the film is most unusual.

Now, towards the end of year four, *Chocolate Cake* is finally scheduled to appear. It will have its world premiere at the Monkland Theatre, June 1, at 9 p.m. in Montreal. Thanks to finishing assistance from the National Film Board of Canada, the cake is finally out of the oven.

Stories about the baking of the *Cake* could go on forever. Obviously *A 20th Century Chocolate Cake* is not your average slick, commercial film, but it is just about everything else. It's a 20th-century adventure in which one learns to accept the world - absurd as it is.

● Fired for photocopying her rear-end, ex-secretary Lucie Tétrault recreates the event



BOOKSHELF

Aspects of Cinema

In Movies from the Mansion, George Perry offers a panoramic history of Pinewood Studios, the film establishment conceived and largely financed by Sir Arthur Rank and dubbed The Mansion. It has played a steady albeit shaky role in the British film industry since 1936. The Second World War and succeeding financial crises affected production, but the presence of such directors as Hitchcock, Truffaut, Huston, Lean and even Chaplin, and such stars as Sean Connery, Glenda Jackson and Jack Buchanan provided a continuity that still prevails. (NY Zoetrope, \$19.95).

A revealing look at America's most popular cult movies probes the bizarre subculture spawned by such films as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *El Topo*, *Reefer Madness* and *Pink Flamingos*. **Midnight Movies** by Stuart Samuels is a lively survey of such films and the audience they attract with their heady mixture of gratuitous violence, unrelieved gore, borderline paranoia and kinky sex. (Macmillan, \$9.95).

It took director Richard Attenborough 20 years to complete his ambitious film project, *Gandhi*, the recent 8-Oscar winner. He tells of his obsessive efforts in an engrossing book, **In Search of Gandhi**, relating the endless rounds of hope and disappointment, high-placed support and bureaucratic opposition, the diplomatic, financial and logistic obstacles he overcame before realizing his dream (New Century, \$17.95).

Biographer of Lubitsch, Stroheim and Sternberg, film critic and journalist

(notably on *Take On*) and all-around movie scholar, Herman G. Weinberg evokes in **Coffee, Brandy and Cigars** and **A Manhattan Odyssey** the highlights of his 60-year dedication to cinema. Autobiographical musings, tributes to great films and their makers, perceptive assessments and anecdotes, all told with uncommon elegance, contribute to the enjoyment of these witty, erudite and worldly-wise memoirs (*Anthology Film Archives*, 491 Broadway, NYC 10012; \$16/8 and \$20/10).

The Reference Shelf

A highly readable, extensively researched and well-organized survey, Frank E. Beaver's **On Film** follows the movies' historic progress, country by country and genre by genre. The art and technique of film are informatively appraised in terms of outstanding contributors, emerging trends and salient events (McGraw-Hill, \$12.95).

An essential tool for research into the literature of the motion picture and, when relevant, television, **The Macmillan Film Bibliography** by George Rehrauer lists some 7000 works dealing with all aspects of the medium and published between 1876 and 1981. Each entry provides a critical review, expertly assessing the book's content and merit, and useful references to other books of similar concern. A thorough index greatly facilitates research (Macmillan, 2 vols. \$120).

The monumental undertaking of reprinting film reviews originally published in trade weekly *Variety* between

1907 and 1980 has been launched with two hefty volumes, **Variety Film Reviews 1938-42** and **Variety Film Reviews 1949-53**. These volumes, respectively numbers 6 and 8 in a collection that will comprise 16 tomes, make easily available the authoritative appraisals that established *Variety's* reputation as the "Bible of Show Business" (Garland, \$150 ea.).

Frank E. Beaver's **Dictionary of Film Terms** is a useful and comprehensive lexicon. Its straightforward and precise definitions cover terms used in the production of movies, their critical evaluation and their technical origin (McGraw-Hill, \$15.95/\$7.95).

Attractively presented and well-documented, David Quinlan's **Illustrated Directory of Film Stars** gathers together comprehensive data of some 1600 movie performers, mostly British and American. Complete filmographies, biographical notes, thumbnail personality sketches, awards and numerous stills provide a goldmine of information (*Hippocrene*, \$35.).

From the Oscars' 1927 debut to last year's ceremonies, Richard Shale's **Academy Awards** offers a convenient three-way classification of all winners and nominees: in chronological order, by category and alphabetically. This thorough reference guide includes an historic section and a bibliography (Ungar, \$28.50/\$14.50).

Directorial Styles

John Belton's collected essays, **Cinema Stylists**, assert that numerous direc-

tors are their films' true "auteur", whose creative authority shapes the style of their films. Belton's analysis of narrative structure and visual style authenticates his claim concerning some 20 directors, including Hitchcock, Preminger, Mizoguchi, Renoir and Chabrol, as well as Chaplin and Griffith (*Scarecrow*, \$19.50).

A probing exploration of Alfred Hitchcock's complex personality and how it affected his work, Donald Spoto's **The Dark Side of Genius** combines psychological insights with a perceptive assessment of the director's films. Stressing their deeply autobiographical nature and analyzing Hitchcock's private and public behavior, Spoto draws a fascinating portrait of a creative man obsessed by violence, repressed sex drives and pervasive guilt feelings (*Little Brown*, \$20.).

Two outstanding directors are discussed in the scholarly "Guides to References and Resources" series published by G.K. Hall: **Luchino Visconti** by Claretta Tonetti, a subtle analysis of Visconti's rebellious nature as channeled into his films (\$24); and **George Roy Hill** by Edward Shores, stressing the myth-creating ability that transcends his films' polished look (\$19.95). Both volumes include well-researched documentation, biographies, full filmographies, bibliographies and archival material.

George L. George •

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REVIEWS

Ralph Thomas' The Terry Fox Story

I didn't spend a lot of time following Terry Fox's run when it happened. The massive emotional manipulation of the event bothered me, and there had been a rather frightening series of articles published in Penthouse attacking the research practices of the American Cancer Society, so the idea of giving money to one of their branch plants was not particularly appealing. Almost more interesting than Terry himself seemed the remarkable emotional response that was being wrrenched from the hearts of stolid, emotionally blocked Ontarians, who took to Terry as if he were a cross between John-Boy Walton and Lassie, come home at last.

This by way of introduction, to show just how prepared I was for a very bad movie, to cynically park myself in the screening room and snarl viciously if anyone tried force-feeding me the milk of human kindness. Admittedly, there were good signs. Ralph Thomas, the director, is not a man easily suckered. One need only look at the tough docudramas he produced at the CBC (especially *Drying Up the Streets*) and *Ticket to Heaven* to see someone with an immense distrust of pieties, conventional and otherwise. Michael Zelnicker, who plays Fox's best friend, Doug Alward, was insistent in conversation that they had made an effort to show Terry, warts and all.

Well, it works, because there are three stories that come together in the film. The first story, where the automatic emotional response comes in, is during the recreation of the public events that we all know so well – and, if we are Torontonians, lived through. The second story is the private Terry Fox, who seems to have been a major pain in the neck: an obsessive, physically-oriented, petulant monomaniac. When everyone is telling him that he's crazy to want to run across Canada, they not only seem eminently more rational, but they seem to be giving him good advice. One gets the feeling that being Doug Alward for the months on the road (Alward drove the van) must have been rather like being locked in a closet with an unstable badger. Of course, if it were the private life alone, one might react to Terry the same way we did to another recent handicapped hero in Canadian movies, Tom Sullivan, in the execrable *If You Could See What I Hear*.

The third story, and the most important, is the real reason that Terry Fox worked as a national symbol. The story is not about this adolescent who died so that others might be cured, but of a single figure out on the highways. It is an elemental story of a human and an environment, and the desolate, mind-numbing loneliness of that image. It may be the best use of the Canadian landscape as a character that we have ever seen in a Canadian movie (*Silence of the North* and *Who Has Seen the Wind* don't quite make it, and *The Grey Fox* is only a corner of the country).

That story, of landscape and figure, is the most emotionally overpowering image in the entire film, and its sheer force



● A petulant monomaniac turned national legend: Eric Fryer in *The Terry Fox Story*

as history and myth means that Thomas, not by nature a manipulative director, can let the story's force rise naturally from the characters and the images. One quivers in terror at the thought of what an emotional mugger like Mark Rydell (*On Golden Pond*) might have done, had he got his hands on this film.

The Terry Fox Story follows its hero from the day he discovers his cancer to the end of the run, where he learns of a new tumor in his lung and is sent home. It covers the relationship with his family, best friend, girlfriend, and Bill Vigers, the Cancer society representative.

Given that Terry Fox is in virtually every frame of the film, an enormous weight falls on Eric Fryer, the young Scarberian who, like Fox, lost a leg to cancer and makes his acting debut here. It is, for someone who must have endured a similar experience to Fox (chemotherapy and learning to walk again), no doubt an emotionally traumatic role as well as one that was physically killing. The first time I saw the film, it seemed that Fryer had an obvious emotional connection with the character he was playing, but that he lacked the acting tools to really give it full expression. The second time through, Fryer seemed more appropriate, as the realization came that Fox himself lacked the expressive tools to bring out what he

was feeling – a great deal of the appeal was that this kid from B.C. obviously was sitting on top of an emotional volcano and struggling to articulate what he felt about his leg, his disease, and the tremendous waves of mass emotion that flowed toward him from the day he crossed the Ontario border to his near canonization at Toronto's City Hall. While it's hard to say if Fryer has the talent to go on and continue acting (he has apparently landed a role in *Home Fires*), he is certainly a major discovery in terms of this film.

Thomas and producer Robert Cooper have been smart enough to surround Fryer with some of the best acting talent available. It is not necessary to speak of the awesome talent of Robert Duvall – anyone who has been to the movies in the past 20 years or so knows how good he is. But a few words are in order on Michael Zelnicker and Chris Makepeace (who plays Terry's brother, Darrell). In a way, the most sympathetic character is Doug Alward. It is not easy for the average person to imagine achieving an impossible task against a crippling handicap. Most people avoid thinking about handicaps, for the simple reason that it is too strong a reminder of the terrible fragility of the human body. Yet it is rather easy to connect with someone who is shunted to the sidelines in an

emotionally stressful situation.

Alward is an interesting character in the film, because he seems to have no family, no friends save Terry, and nothing important to do with his life but drive the van for his friend. With his hair cut jock-short, his glasses and hooded sweatshirts, Zelnicker projects an almost monkish asceticism into the character, simultaneously conveying the sense that he knows he is helping his best friend commit suicide, and being perfectly willing to help him, because he knows that he can do nothing to dissuade him.

It is also very pleasant to see Makepeace, a moist-eyed, worshipful wimp in films like *Meatballs* and *The Last Chase*, finally playing a character with a few smarts of his own. It may be the first time that he has actually been likeable on screen.

The rest of the cast is uniformly good – special mention should be made of Elva Mai Hoover, who plays Terry's mother, and is thus saddled with one almost unplayable scene – and lends a sort of authenticity to the proceedings. The insistence on the Canadianness of the project comes through in large part because all the actors appear with their accents, like, intact, eh? While it may be rare to see a Canadian flag on-screen in a Canadian film, or to hear Toronto referred to as Toronto, it is even rarer to hear that constricted Ontario voice squeezing out through the emotionally clenched vocal cords of real Canadian actors.

The Terry Fox Story captures the heroism of its subject by refusing to shy away from his often unpleasant humanity, and that may be its remarkable achievement. It shows some aspect of the reality behind the myth (the most noble suicide of our time) without betraying the innately heroic aspect of the myth.

John Harkness ●

THE TERRY FOX STORY d. Ralph L. Thomas p. Robert Cooper sc. Edward Hume story John Kastner & Rose Kastner exec. p. Gunsten I. Rosenfeld & Michael A. Levine assoc. p. John Eckert d.o.p. Richard Ciupka art d. Gavin Mitchell ed. Ron Wisman casting Canadian Casting Associates music Bill Conti p. man. Joyce Kozy King unit loc. man. Otta Hannus 1st a. d. Bill Corcoran asst. d. Bruce Moriarty. Kim Winther. Jacques Hubert. Hagan Beggs asst. art d. Rolf Harvey cam. op. Andy Chmura 1st asst. cam. Neil Seale 2nd asst. cam. Kerry Smart Steadicam op. Ted Churchill sd. rec. Bruce Carwardine boom Glen Gauthier sd. ed. Jon Hopkins re-rec. Joe Grimaldi set dec. Mark Freeborn asst. set dec. Paul Harding props master Dan Wladyka asst. prop. master George Fariell ward. Lynda Kempas asst. ward. Eila Lank make-up Michele Burke hair Malcolm Tanner gaffer Steve Ferner best boy John Ferguson key grip Michael Kohne grip James Kohne driver captain Brian O'Hara craft service Debbie Beers gen. op. Mike Beer extras Karen Pike & Linda Egan unit publicist Marlee Novak p. assts. Carole Riback. Kelly Makin sc. sup. Sarah Grahame p. acc't. Ann Fitzgerald p. co-ord. Deborah Zwicker asst. to the p. Marlee Novak asst. ed. Bryon White Foley ed. Terry Burke music ed. Steven A. Hope asst. sd. ed. Richard Kelly stills Lawrie Raskin p.c. Robert Cooper Production in assoc. with H.B.O. and CTV with the participation of Superchannel dist. Astral Films/Twentieth Century Fox. 35mm colour running time: 98 mins. L.p. Robert Duvall, Eric Fryer, Chris Makepeace, Rosalind Chao, Michael Zelnicker, Elva Mai Hoover, Frank Adamson, Marie McCann, R.H. Thomson, Saul Rubinek, Chuck Shamat, Clyde Rose, Patrick Watson, Austin Davis, Matt Craven, Dorothy Wyatt, Steven Hunter, Robert Des Roches, Jayne Foster, Karen Racicot, Howie Siegel, Laura Vickers, Gary Darycott, Gary Baker, Wayne Brace, Barry Greene, Al Coombs, Lori Chodos, Laurie Oberdin, Jaclyn Stevens, Ian Heath, Brian Kaulback, Murray Lowry, Susan Payne.

Kevin Sullivan's The Wild Pony

There was a lot of pride going around at the press screening of *The Wild Pony*. After years of stage, radio and TV work in Alberta and B.C., producer Eda Lishman was proud of having made her first feature and of having pulled off an industry breakthrough of sorts: she'd become the first western producer to come to Toronto and get backing after being turned down by the standard networks. Pay-TV company First Choice, which provided that backing, was proud of their hard-cash commitment to independent, all-Canadian production and of the fact that they'd already gotten their European distribution in place.

Scripture buffs will have guessed what's coming next, and you're right. For the rest of you, "Pride goeth before a fall," and *The Wild Pony* is a dud.

Some of the awfulness is technical – slightly uneven location sound, a hen-house that falls over for no apparent reason. More of it is on the craft level – Hagood Hardy's terminally wispy score, Michael Lonzon's merely pretty photography, the sets dressed and lit to look like sets, and the occasional spurt of bouncy-bouncy pointless cutting. But none of that would even be worth mentioning if there were anything at the heart of the film. But there isn't.

Which is truly amazing. A story about a young farmboy in turn-of-the-century Alberta who unites his mother and his new step-father and reintegrates himself into family through his obsession with a wild horse sounds like the basis for a surefire family entertainment-type drama and it probably would have been if anybody had bothered to film the drama, but mostly they didn't – they telegraphed it. Like this: Chris, the boy, gets his first look at the horse one morning when he's out doing chores.

We get a shot of horses running, a reaction shot, more running and another reaction shot. With nothing in the shooting or cutting to give us a feel for the power and the beauty of the animals, we're thrown back to the boy's reactions. And with no knowledge of either his character or emotional state, we're thrown back to reading actor Josh Byrne's face. And it's blank.

Much later, when the horse runs away and the boy follows on foot through a violent snowstorm, we're given only a very few shots before the horse is found; we've no idea how hard Chris had to work to get to the horse and, more significantly, no idea of how far he's come. So, when the horse walks back into the barn with Chris clinging to it, apparently more dead than alive, we're left to infer their heroic trudge through night and stinging wind. Personally, I'd like to have seen it, partly for the drama – it's the first time horse and boy are united and they're facing death – and partly because it was the last chance either had to develop a character. It didn't happen, so both remained cyphers to the end.

Marilyn Lightstone, as Sarah, the boy's mother, doesn't get to develop a character either, but for much different reasons: she isn't given anything consistent to work with. What are we to make of a character who shows herself as an astute, good-humoured businesswoman striking a very good deal, then in the same day refuses supper to her son, saying, "We can use the money we save on his food to feed that horse," only to then show up in the barn with a handful of costly food for the boy to give the horse? Is she neurotic? Does she love her kids, or hate them? Or is she just playing the scene the way she's told and hoping it'll come together in the cutting?

Art Hindle, as Frank Chase, the man Sarah talks into a marriage of convenience, does have a character, and he plays it as well, on a scene-by-scene basis, as Lightstone does hers, but the character he plays has no relation to the character the script sets us up for. He's introduced as a hard-core bachelor, set

in his ways and loving them. But as soon as he's wed, he turns into the loving husband and father. No transition, no conflict. A set-up that never pays off.

That's followed immediately by a conflict with no set-up and no sense to it. Given the sort of man Chris' natural father was, he should have leapt into Frank's arms with joy. Instead, he chooses to resent him. His reasons are never made clear and his surface dislike is never convincing, but the conflict at least gets paid off in the punch-up with the town bullies.

It's a good sequence and there are others, mostly involving Lightstone's skill with comedy, but they're never enough to overcome the sense that *The Wild Pony* was a terrific story that happened when the filmmakers weren't looking.

It's hard to know if any of this matters. The family entertainment genre has developed a recent and strong tradition of success with schlock worse than this and kids are capable of strong responses to the blandest-seeming, most unlikely material. But it does seem a shame to feed them the gristle, even inadvertently, when they could have had the meat.

Andrew Dowler ●

THE WILD PONY p. Eda Lishman assoc. p. Kevin Sullivan d. Kevin Sullivan p. man. Eda Lishman screen adapt. Eda Lishman & Kevin Sullivan 1st asst. d. Randy Chevelldave 2nd. asst. d. Nives Lever 3rd. asst. d./loc. man. Earl Peturson d.o.p. Michael Lonzon 1st asst. cam. Peter Woeste 2nd. asst. cam. Sean Gorman sd. rec. Lars Ekstrom boom Don Brown gaffer Malcolm Kibblewhite costume des. Martha Mann props/set dressing Martin Weinryb wardrobe mistress Lori Ashton asst. ward. mistress Karen Murray p. co-ord. Nancy McMurphy Peturson asst. p. man. Margaret Haraba cont. Candice Field key grip Bill Mills grip asst. Anna Marie Plosz make-up Pearl Louie transp. captain Tom Charlton craft services Wendy Fitt construction man. Eric James set des. Dick Bylin carpenters Bruce Robinson, Tom Scheitel set painters A. Gazetas, Mary Gazetas animal handler Gigi Van Ostrand p. asst's. Mike Baker, Wendy Cesar d. of 2nd unit Randy Chevelldave 1st. asst. d. of 2nd unit Diane Edmondson cameraman, 2nd unit Rick Garbutt sd. rec., 2nd unit Tom Archer ed. Stan Cole asst. ed. Rick Benwick music Hagood Hardy publicist Kathryn Fedori p.c. Pony Film Productions Inc. Licensed to First Choice Pay T.V. running time: 90 min. colour, 16 mm Lp. Marilyn Lightstone, Art Hindle, Josh Byrne, Kelsey McLeod, Murray Ord, Paul Jolicoeur, Jack Ackroyd, Bob Collins, Tommy Banks, Mark Kay, Phillip Clark, Ron Tucker, Jack Goth, J.R. Beauregard, Brian Weightman, Danny Masnyk, Margaret Haraba, Eric Cortez.

Don McBrearty's American Nightmare

Here is a movie that should be treated as were those pharaohs whose names were stricken from every record so that even the fact of their once having lived would be forgotten for all time. *American Nightmare* should never have been made and, except for a single line reading, "Avoid at all costs," it should probably not be reviewed.

The foulness set in from the moment the naked, stoned hooker began writhing on the bed while the faceless man washed his hands in the bathroom. It wasn't only that it was clear from the start that she was due to get straight-razored, but she writhed so woodenly that even the group across the aisle, who seemed to feel that good cinema was intimately entwined with the slaughter of young women, began to groan in disgust. That was the first scene.

I was ready to walk by the end of the

second. That was the scene with the young hero telling his no-good, rich daddy that he was off to rescue runaway, troubled sis. Not only did it set the tone for the acting – badly stilted – and the lighting – cheap porn – but it signalled clearly that sis was the slashed hooker and daddy and his smarmy henchman were the perpetrators.

For those among you who may think that slash-and-burn reviews are necessarily done to provide a sick little ego-boost for the writer, let me tell you: they're not. The ego-boosts come from being stimulated at the movies and feeling that you've passed it on in print. Nor are they done for the fun of sitting around and thinking up vivid ways of describing awfulness, not when describing means first recalling those murky, flat, uncomposed images that look like they were processed in the urinals at the Morrissey, a sleazy Toronto bar.

I'm stressing this also because, if you have grasped the concept of 'not fun', then you have the essence of *American Nightmare*.

It is not fun to report that Lawrence S. Day, the hero, is marginally better with his body than his voice, which is awful, or that his resemblance to Donald Sutherland is so strong that, as soon as his face matures, his film career will very likely drop dead.

It is not fun to report that Michael Ironside and Lenore Zann, the two solid professionals in the cast, are able to achieve nothing more than paying the rent, thanks to a script filled with irrelevancies, banalities and emotion telegraphed in words so flavourless and clichéd they might have been laid in with the infamous Republic Pictures rubber-stamp dialogue kit (reportedly used on every Republic serial between 1946 and 1952).

It is not fun to report that *American Nightmare* is so ill-directed that the camera set-ups make it clear there is no place for the slasher to hide when he is supposed to be lurking in the girl's tiny apartment, or that, moments later, having slit the wrists of another naked, stoned blonde, this one in a bathtub, he is allowed to destroy the fake suicide he's just created by, first, drowning her, then taking the razor away with him.

It is not fun to report how, in something supposed to be a mystery, every attempt to draw attention to a fresh suspect is cancelled by positively locating that suspect elsewhere at the time of the next attack.

American Nightmare is blatantly made and set in Toronto. In choosing the title they did, the producers, Paul Lynch among them, seem to have sought to clear us all of the taint of guilt by association.

I applaud what seems to me a gesture of the deepest patriotism.

Andrew Dowler ●

AMERICAN NIGHTMARE (formerly Community Standards) exec. p. Paul Lynch, Tony Kramreither p. Ray Sager d. Don McBrearty sc. John Sheppard p. man. Robert Wertheimer asst. p. man. Fran Solomon asst. d. David Pamplin 2nd asst. d. Lindsay Paterson, Derrett Lee d.o.p. Dan Hainey cont. Tannis Baker art. d. Andy Deskin' asst. art d. Ken Clark asst. cam. Scott Barrie ward. Ariadna Ochrymovych, Martha Snetsinger hair/make-up Miriam Freifeld grip Bill Hertz 2nd grip Craig Heintz gaffer John Herzog mixer Dan Latour boom Reynald Trudel labour Ian Bresolin driver/p.a. Richard Quinlan, John Gillm Robin Rosenberg ed. Ian McBride asst. ed. Karen Hall prod. asst. Paul Fox p.c. Mano Films Ltd. dist. Pan Canadian running time: 90 min. 35mm colour l.p. Lawrence S. Day, Lora Staley, Lenore Zann, Claudia Udy, Page Fletcher, Mike Ironside, Larry Aubrey, Neil Daynard, Tom Harvey.



● Thrifty Mom: Marilyn Lightstone in *The Wild Pony*

Douglas Williams' **Best of Both Worlds**

CBC's feature-length romantic comedy *Best Of Both Worlds*, which aired April 21, leaves one with the uncomfortable suspicion that the more "Canadian" people become, the less value they retain as human beings.

Sharmila (Malika Mendez), a charming young Indian beauty, is flown direct from Asia for a family-arranged marriage with Anil (Sugith Varughese), the Canadianized son of (presumably) first-generation immigrants, whom she's never met. But Anil already has a girlfriend, Tammy (Gaye Burgess), the pampered daughter of wealthy Toronto WASPS, and agrees to the marriage only when he learns about the \$50,000 dowry that comes with his mail-order bride. It's "the big chance" they've been waiting for – Anil plans to use the 50 grand to set up in business, so he'll be able to keep Tammy "in the style to which she's accustomed" (though he'll keep a few thou. aside for an RRSP – Anil's already a very Canadian sort of entrepreneur).

In short, Anil is a creep on the make, and one of the lesser mysteries of the plot is why two lovely women should bother fighting over him. But director Douglas Williams never lets the pace slacken enough for us to worry much about it.

More worrisome is the moral vacuity of characters like Anil and Tammy. Anil, a first-generation-born Canadian, works hard to deny his cultural roots: when his mother serves an Indian dinner, he goes to the fridge looking for left-over pizza. Or he amuses his WASP girlfriend with his 'Peter Sellers' take-off on an East Indian accent, though the humor falls flat with Sharmila there as a mirror for Anil's cultural suicide.

Having defined his identity in negatives – the great Canadian compromise – in the end Anil is loyal only to money. His new wife shows him the antique jewelry she's brought as her dowry; the reflection of light from the gold ripples across her head like the aura of a madonna, and the materialist Anil is impressed. The fact that the dowry takes the form of a family heirloom, instead of ready cash as Anil had expected ("I thought it would be a cheque," he says desperately) is a vivid capsule summary of the contradiction between Old World values and New.

Specifically, the rejection of the Old World implies the disintegration of the power of the family – i.e., arranged marriages – but once 'liberated' from family, the isolated individual finds that his only link with society is through the mega-corporation. Thus Anil's cluttered bachelor apartment is crowded with huge cartons of the soapflake product he promotes in supermarkets. (One of the few times we see any spunk in Anil – or any hint of life in his relationship with Tammy – is when they perform a little guerilla theatre to dupe a supermarket manager into granting Anil's soapflakes better shelf space.)

Anil's scam (ripping off the dowry) expresses his profound disdain for his cultural roots, a common enough New World disorder among first-generation immigrants or *indépendantistes*.

But Anil begins to sense that he has underestimated the strength of the old culture as he stands under the wedding canopy with his radiant bride, surrounded

by well-wishers – the extended family, the tribe. In the flower-strewn hotel suite when Sharmila (the woman he met only a few hours before) unabashedly summons him to his marital duties, our hero, this child of the new America, destroyer of tradition's stifling bonds, can only flee.

In this sea of moral bankruptcy – like the swimming-pool in Tammy's house which her mother keeps well-stocked with bored young lawyers – Sharmila stands out like a beacon of hope for humanity. She's a sort of Superwoman – beautiful, charming, patient, courageous, and a scrappy fighter. Billed as the unfortunate dupe in Anil's dowry-heist, she quickly makes mincemeat of Tammy and when the melodrama ends we are confident that she may even manage to make, if not a man of Anil, at least a satisfactorily domesticated stud. Tradition will be maintained for perhaps another generation, thanks to this fresh infusion of values from the old country.

Sharmila's secret, of course, is that *her* life is still meshed with her traditional values – she knows what she believes, and therefore she believes in herself. The only thing Canadian about her is that, like the RCMP, she gets her man – and there's something quaintly nostalgic about that too, in this age of cynicism about monogamy. (When Anil claims his parents know nothing of love if they believe in arranged marriages, his father retorts: "In our culture, you don't fall in love, you grow into it!")

And yet *Best of Both worlds* is no blind eulogy to a Golden Age of the past either. Sharmila admits to Anil that the reason she was ready to marry him, was to get out of India. When Tammy, in a last-ditch attempt to hang onto Anil, praises the richness and romance of India, Sharmila shoots her down: "If you haven't been there, how do you know?"

Tradition may carry important human values, but the old worlds that produced them are no longer – and here we come against the major stumbling-block of *Best of Both Worlds*. True, for the moment Sharmila's determination and strong roots have saved the day, but what about tomorrow? In an age when one in three marriages end in divorce, can "girl gets man" really do as a satisfactory denouement? Already by the end, Sharmila has changed her clothes and hairdo for western styles – "You're

beautiful!" Anil exclaims.

A vital key to the politics of cultural imperialism is that the colonized develop a taste for the boss's treacle, and soon prefer it to domestic brands. And so the implicit theme of cultural dilution of *Best of Both Worlds* becomes a critical comment on Canadian production awash in the gooey treacle from the airwaves south of the border. Because Canadian productions are themselves a minority in the continental broadcasting environment, they're judged by a separate standard – and TV in North America prefers not to be judged at all, it just IS.

True, there's often something that chafes about a Canadian production like *Best of Both Worlds*. At first I thought it was Sugith Varughese's acting that wasn't up to pip – there was something uncomfortably wrong about Anil. But that wasn't it either. American TV has habituated us to expect strong male heroes, surrounded by a court of supportive females. Egos somewhat frazzled at the edges after a day at work, Americans settle down each evening in front of their multi-channel dream machines for a fresh dose of mythology – from the mainline. That's why American TV must be written to a formula, like Harlequin romances.

But while Canadians have proven quite capable of reproducing the formula flawlessly in some of the simpler genres (e.g., Harlequin romances or *Porky's*), on (some) film and TV lingers a revisionist tendency to portray reality. This may be in part a residuum of Canada's strong documentary tradition, but, more important, it reflects the unacknowledged preoccupation with our economic and political – and therefore cultural – dependence. Canadians know only too well that they're not the heroes, and therefore an impotent, equivocating, worm like Anil can slip in as a *pseudo-hero*. Unfortunately, such a radical departure from the prescribed litany generates sufficient discomfort in the regular TV *aficionado* that he often switches channels.

Still, the fact that *Best of Both Worlds* was made and aired at all is proof that Canada has grown a lot. Not so long ago, a CBC producer would have steered clear of a social comedy that made light of the customs of one of our minority groups – and yet, in a country where more people now stem from "minority"

groups than from either of the "founding" nations, what else is Canada about if not the dialectic between Old and New World values?

Recently a group of CBC producers published a proposal recommending that the public network commit itself to a policy of 100% Canadian content. Unfortunately we still live in a time when such a proposal can scarcely hope to be taken seriously. And yet, in the end, a film like *Best of Both Worlds* is an eloquent argument for how much we would stand to gain from such a policy.

Alan Herscovici ●

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS p. Lawrence S. Mirkin d. Douglas Williams sc. Sugith Varughese asst. d. Rob Malenfant unit man. Alan MacPherson designer David Moe cont. Kathryn Buck d.o.p. Nick Evdemon casting Dorothy Gardner, Claire Hewitt, Michelle Metivier p. sec. Susan Howard p.c. CBC running time 85 min. 6 sec. Lp. Sugith Varughese, Malika Mendez, Gaye Burgess, Maida Rogerson, Joe Ziegler, Layne Coleman, Angelo Rizacos, Jack Jessop, Desh Bandu, Sanyogta Singh, Swarran Singh, Elena Kudaba, Alf Humphries, Charlotte Freedlander, Al Bernado, Amrita Sethi, Samantha Singh.

Michael Rubbo's **Daisy: The Story of a Facelift**

In documentary, character is everything. In fact I'd say that documentary is the unconscious search for character. I say unconscious because we documentary filmmakers have often not realized the importance to our films of character delineation. We have often been too concerned with issues to notice that it is only when these issues are lived by a real person that they become interesting.

Michael Rubbo

This is not the story of Daisy's face, before and after. Ironically, in this film about a facelift, the face is relatively unimportant. It is Daisy De Bellefeuille's sense of humour and incisive character that carry the film beyond the level of investigative cinematic journalism. Ultimately the film becomes one of character portrayal, a study of the private person behind the mask. And this is probably exactly what Rubbo intended.

From the moment Daisy, a 55-year-old National Film Board executive, makes her decision to have a facelift, Rubbo and his camera follow her through the various emerging stages of her experience: rational, psychological, emotional and medical. In Rubbo's characteristic documentary style, he forges a relationship with Daisy which allows her to unfold naturally and easily before the camera. Once he has gained her trust and acceptance, he can begin to assert his own opinions as an agent provocateur; he can ask touchy, leading questions which provoke Daisy to unravel motives behind her elective surgery: vanity, insecurity and a need to be loved. Rubbo's discreet yet persistent on-screen presence is the catalyst behind Daisy's unfolding.

Daisy is compelled – in response to the sometimes unsympathetic, uncomprehending judgements of friends and acquaintances, sometimes by Rubbo's



● East-West dialogue: Sugith Varughese flanked by Gaye Burgess (left) and Malika Mendez



• Michael Rubbo's latest is indeed a slice of life

probing questions, and more often by her own propensity for self-analysis – to face the truth within herself. She admits that she is terrified of growing old, afraid that “the past may become more interesting than the future.” In a rather cruel, unsubtle juxtaposition, Rubbo gives us Daisy's greatest fear – that of becoming “a little old lady who simply behaves herself” – as the camera focuses on a grey-haired old woman attempting against all odds to look dainty whilst eating a sandwich under a hairdryer. Rubbo proceeds to audaciously rub the point in further as he has the old lady pose demurely, newly coiffed and tottering, before the mocking camera eye. Unfortunately, this little old lady who incarnates Daisy's greatest fear, has behaved for Rubbo's camera, and has unwittingly derided herself in the context of the act.

The point is driven in, again and again, that there are cogent arguments in support of cosmetic surgery. First and foremost: human beings are inclined to discriminate on the basis of appearance. As an attractive woman whose signs of age are beginning to show, Daisy knows this only too well. A self-proclaimed romantic, she once saw work as “something a woman did in between being in love.” But now she, who lived her life for a man, ends up with a terrific career and no man. The men who used to come and go, now mostly go. So it is time to upgrade the product, because Daisy is ready to fall in love again.

She tests her hypothesis that looks and youth are critical factors which

attract men to women on her doctor-friend's husband. He readily admits that before you open the package, you look at the wrapping. And in an age when quick first impressions are usually the only bases we have for either pursuing or avoiding further contact, older women stand less chance of nabbing the man than their youthful, more attractive counterparts. (Daisy claims that a man's attractiveness is less important.)

Rubbo does some investigating of his own. At the New York Public Library, he researches the work of early physiognomists who claimed that there was some relationship between facial features and character or disposition. To test whether we still look at faces this way, he asks a psychologist from the University of Massachusetts (who unequivocally claims that people's faces influence the way we think about them), an employment counsellor (who says that 85 percent of the information we receive about another person is visual) and a waitress (who admits that the prettier waitresses get the best tips). Obviously Daisy has a point.

Once the value system out of which Daisy made her decision has been fully scrutinized, Rubbo moves in on the medical practitioners who capitalize on it: the cosmetic surgeons. They see themselves as fulfilling a societal need. In restructuring noses, breasts, buttocks, thighs and faces, these sculptors of human flesh bestow their clients with the bodily features they feel themselves entitled to, the features they feel really belong to them. Post-operative clients

willingly testify to their happiness with their new appearance. They candidly admit to a previous dissatisfaction with their looks and all confess that they underwent surgery so that they could have an appearance that they could live with. Vanity is taken for granted; no moral or social guilt trips here.

Daisy perceives herself as fortunate for never having learned the meaning of “Anglo-Saxon guilt.” She philosophizes that everything comes and goes: marriages, children, money... In the end, says this veteran of three failed marriages and mother of two children: “All you're stuck with is yourself.” And as it helps to be stuck with a self you can accept, if that means tampering with the wrapping, so be it.

During the facelift sequence, Rubbo's mellow narration and soothing instrumentals coax the squeamish viewer gently through the gruesome procedure. “Now comes the nasty part, close your eyes,” he warns as a rubbery flap of cheek skin is pincer-stretched to one side, and the surgeon extracts spirals of fat from underneath the patient's chin. At this moment of truth – when an anaesthetized face is being cut, trimmed and re-fitted – we see the face for what it is: a mask.

Six weeks after Daisy's facelift, she is packing for a European tour. She still looks like Daisy. The difference is perceptible, but barely. Like the difference between a tired face and a rested one, she now seems a shade smoother, more relaxed. But she knows her face best after living with it for 55 years, and to her the difference is obvious and striking. She feels more secure about her appearance and projects a more attractive persona. And... yes, Daisy gets her man.

Lyn Martin •

DAISY: THE STORY OF A FACE-LIFT d./ed. Michael Rubbo d.o.p. Susan Trow add. photog. Ned Johnston mus. ed. Julian Olson loc. sd. Claude Hazanavicius add. loc. sd. Alex Griswold, Yves Gendron sd. ed. André Galbrand sd. efx. & mus. ed. Julian Olson re-rec. Hans Peter Strobl orig. treatment Michael Rubbo, Kate Jansen from an idea by Harry Galkin research Kate Jansen p. Michael Rubbo assoc. p. Giles Walker exec. p. Adam Symansky, produced and distributed by The National Film Board of Canada running time 57:40 colour 16mm.

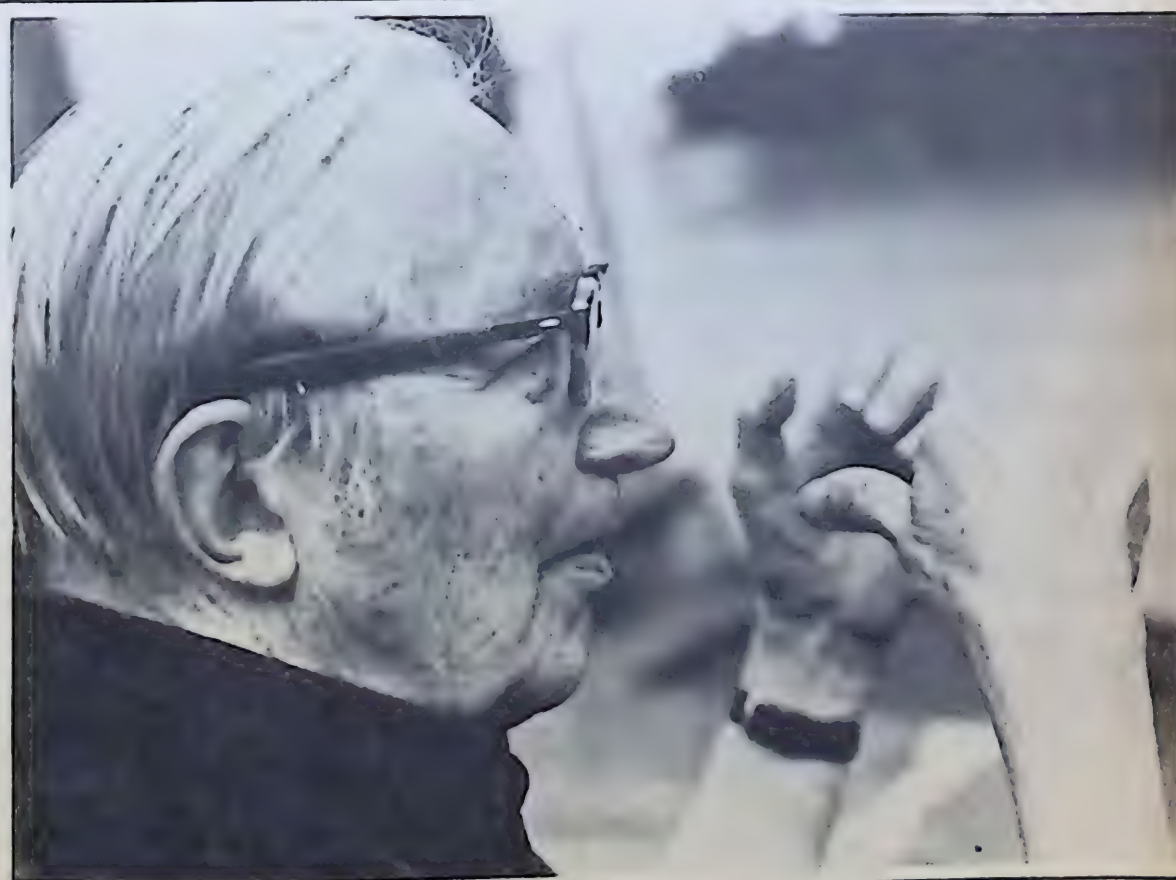
Donald Winkler's

F.R. Scott: Rhyme and Reason

Director Donald Winkler has a number of fine films to his credit, including *In Praise of Hands* (1974), *Travel Log* (1978) and *Earle Birney: Portrait of a Poet* (1981). Director-editor Albert Kish has also gained distinction by his work on films like *Best Damn Fiddler From Calabodie to Kaladar* (1968, editor), *Time Piece* (1971), *Los Canadienses* (1975), and *Paper Wheat* (1978). *F.R. Scott: Rhyme and Reason* is the fourth film on which Winkler and Kish have collaborated. Perhaps that is why I was so surprised to find the film tediously boring and without a heart.

There is no doubt that F.R. Scott is himself an amazing human being: poet, politician, lawyer, constitutional expert, defender of civil liberties. Organizer of the League for Social Reconstruction in 1932 and its president from 1935-36, national chairman of the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) from 1942-1950, member of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, dean of law at McGill University from 1961 to 1964, F.R. Scott has throughout his life been engaged with the major social questions of our times. He seems, in essence, a man of concepts and words. Clearly, a man of reason. But the title of the film promises rhyme as well. And this, in its deepest sense, we do not find here.

The film does quote from Scott's poetry. But something more is needed, something to humanize for us this man of concepts and abstractions and legalistic brilliance. Instead, the film is strictly academic in the worst sense of that word. It is like a lengthy lecture and its overwhelming verbosity makes us yearn for moments of silence, lightness, laughter. There is almost an endless stream of “talking heads.” The interviews with David Lewis, Leon Edel, A.M. Smith, Louis Dudek, Graham Fraser, and Marcel Rioux all seem coldly analytical in



• Brilliance without heart: poet F.R. Scott as a talking head

content and visually repetitious: a medium-shot of a man discussing an abstract idea. Talking heads are not in themselves anathema, nor is the discussion of abstract ideas, but the combination on such a scale seems to move us further and further into impersonal, academic abstraction. Certainly we move further away from the man, F.R. Scott, and any sense of him as a whole person. There is so little emotion expressed in the film that even the interview with his son, Peter Scott, concentrates on the father's ideas. As words pile upon more words, they begin to seem like a protective device to keep us from seeing who F.R. Scott really is.

Unfortunately, the chronological structure of the film does not serve to its advantage either. The archival stills and footage are simply not visually interesting enough to contribute anything on their own. They are used like visual aids to a lecture, literally translating facts in the commentary. At times this visual paucity becomes embarrassing, as when the filmmakers utilize courtroom sketches to illustrate a legal case undertaken by Scott, or when a montage of newspaper clippings is supposed to illuminate a point. I saw this film with a friend. At its end, she turned to me and said, "This should have been a book." In this monology, the filmmakers have included some of F.R. Scott's poetry; they should have put in little of their own.

Joyce Nelson ●

F.R. SCOTT: RHYME AND REASON

exec. p. Barrie Howells p. Tom Daly d./sc. Donald Winkler ed. Albert Kish d.o.p. Barry Perles, Andy Kitkanuk research Sheila Fischman loc. sd. Bev Davidson, Jean-Guy Normandin, Hans Oomes mus. Alain Clavier mus. rec. Louis Hone re-rec. Hans Peter Strobl colour 16mm running time 57 min. p.c. National Film Board, 1983.

Mini-reviews

With this issue Cinema Canada increases its coverage of Canadian short films by publishing a "Mini-review" section each month. Over 1000 Canadian shorts are produced every year. By concentrating on one distributor each month and reviewing a series of shorts, we hope to be able to cover more films than in the past and to give that distributor more exposure. This month features shorts from Kinetic Film Enterprises Ltd., Toronto.

ACID REIGN

A short sharp overview of an "invisible, silent, form of violence." Lyrical views of the beauties of nature, including lovely lakes, lead to melting snow which harbours the acid rain released in the spring melt.

Foliage and berries die; lead pipes carrying drinking water are eaten away; building stonework decays inexorably; and a public statuary displays mute evidence of erosion with the loss of extremities and faces smoothed to blankness.

Smoke stacks, factories and car exhausts all lead to the low-key message – a need for laws to contain acid rain and for a combined US/Canada effort.

Good photography and underwhelming music reinforce this introduction to one of today's relentless problems.

ACID REIGN A film by Helen Henshaw. 10 min. 16mm.

HIGHWINDING

Mike Gadd, Harry Hall and Derek Wulff, wizards of board sailing, or wind surfing as it is popularly known, display their fabulous footwork and expertise.

A lesson for beginners shows that everyone keeps falling into the water at first, but it takes only a few hours to learn the basics.

The experts give a nifty display of the tricky stuff – sailing the board on its edge, turning completely around while bowling along (and still staying upright), and a series of backwards and forwards bends with head touching the rushing water.

A lively, interesting look at the popular sport, with not too much talk, pleasant music, and lovely photography from Barry Stone.

HIGHWINDING d. Eric Goddard cam. Barry Stone p. Paul Caulfield p.c. Film Arts Ltd. 15 min. 16mm.

SEASONS OF THE MIND

A look at two senior citizens, Doug Robinson and Bill MacQuillan, who filled the gaps in their lives by going to university.

Both in their early '70s, they had tried volunteer work, but the need to more fully exercise the mind led them to seek the higher learning that had been denied them in the '20s depression.

But it's not all a bed of roses. There's the problem of coping with new equipment, organizing study-time, and the mind too – the old memory bank isn't what it was, says one ruefully.

A stimulating look at the retirement life of two determined people fitting in well with the younger academic element, and all reaping benefits. Competently shot, but with uninspiring 'wallpaper' music which, luckily, doesn't detract from the gutsy subject matter.

SEASONS OF THE MIND d./cam. Anthony Hall add. cam. Terence Macartney-Filgate p.c. Film Arts Ltd. 21 min. 16mm.

JOHN DOE

A rueful look at losing one's job and why – though the 'why' remains elusive.

A scripted piece of gentle humour introducing John Doe discovering the name plate being removed from his office door.

Back in his apartment he telephones without success: "I'd like to talk to someone about my job." But the word is out, and the repossession of his possessions starts. In the end, John Doe is left with the one thing they cannot take away...

A slight, rather soft little exercise, with good production values – well shot by Mark Irwin and with David Grimes' pleasant original music. But what does it say? Not much, really.

JOHN DOE d./sc. Larry Moore cam. Mark Irwin mus. (composed/performed) David Grimes p. Paul Caulfield l.p. Larry Moore, Ray Landry p.c. Film Arts Ltd. 8 min. 16mm.

THE VEGETARIAN WORLD

"Animals are my friends, and I don't eat my friends."

George Bernard Shaw

A whirlwind tour of vegetarianism, hosted by William Shatner, himself a devotee of meatless meals.

An entire approach to life is reinforced by people recounting their reasons for the choice and illustrations from around the world – Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and various eastern countries. Many names are dropped of famous vegetarians – Socrates, Shelley, Schweitzer, DaVinci, Tolstoy, Gandhi, and, of course, Shaw. Discussions of recipes and the array of dishes are enough to make the mouth water.

There's a section of nasty bits relating to chickens being killed and cattle slaughter in abattoirs, plus the horrors of raising milk-fed veal.

Children's perception of animals as friends, and then their eventual realization they are eating them, seems a mite forced.

A summary of facts and statistics indicates that if more pasture land was utilized to produce vegetables and fruit, more of the world population could be fed.

According to publicity, this film was three years in the making and filmed in nine countries. It seems such a big effort for such a tiny nibble at what appears to be a fascinating mode of life. Too many snippets of information are crammed into too little time and the film exudes a faintly self-righteous air. However, as an introduction, a starting point for further exploration, it certainly has its uses.

THE VEGETARIAN WORLD p./d./cam. Jonathon Kay sc. William Whitehead & John Bemrose orig. mus. Bernie Senensky, performed by Moe Koffman Quintet host/narrator William Shatner. 28 min. 50 sec. 16mm.

Pat Thompson ●

● The lyricism of pollution: Helen Henshaw's *Acid Reign* introduces one of today's relentless problems



BOX OFFICE

G R O S S E S

TITLE origin - language - distributor	Date of release	Number of weeks	Number of cities/screens	GROSS	Number of cities/screens	GROSS	Number of cities/screens	GROSS	Number of cities/screens	GROSS	CUMULATED GROSSES
NATIONAL OVERVIEW			APRIL 9		APRIL 16		APRIL 23		APRIL 30		
AU CLAIR DE LA LUNE canada - french - cml	3/4	8	1/1	4,487	1/1	2,088	1/1	2,359	-/-	-	37,826
BAD BOYS usa - english - universal	4/22	1	-/-	-	-/-	-	-/-	-	5/20	128,312	128,312
THE BETRAYAL usa - english - 20th century fox	3/4	8	3/3	20,713	3/3	13,861	3/3	12,669	3/3	11,014	134,528
THE BLACK STALLION RETURNS usa - english - united artists	3/25	5	6/23	117,361	6/17	54,420	6/7	23,144	5/5	11,335	371,392
L'ETOILE DU NORD france - french - paramount	3/25	5	1/1	10,051	1/1	6,392	1/1	5,170	1/1	4,543	36,199
EXPOSED united kingdom - english - united artists	4/22	1	-/-	-	-/-	-	-/-	-	3/3	48,534	48,534
FLASHDANCE usa - english - paramount	4/15	2	-/-	-	-/-	-	5/13	129,787	6/13	160,668	290,455
48 HRS usa - english - paramount	12/10	20	6/6	29,939	6/6	28,297	6/7	30,298	6/7	28,748	2,175,248
GHANDI united kingdom - eng. & fr. - columbia	12/17	19	6/16	241,077	6/17	215,261	6/17	252,078	6/17	212,822	3,111,693
THE GREY FOX canada - english - united artists	3/25	5	1/1	33,800	2/2	40,547	5/6	49,909	5/7	51,581	205,337
HIGH ROAD TO CHINA usa - english - warner brothers	3/18	6	6/26	194,922	6/27	125,515	6/18	87,580	6/16	71,885	1,059,885
KING OF COMEDY usa - english - 20th century fox	2/18	10	4/6	36,230	5/7	29,530	6/6	24,255	6/6	18,044	286,069
LOCAL HERO united kingdom - english - warner brothers	3/4	8	6/6	61,049	6/6	45,677	6/9	48,498	6/10	53,444	307,875
LONE WOLF McQUADE usa - english - orion pictures	4/15	2	-/-	-	-/-	-	6/22	257,115	6/22	141,925	399,040
LUCIEN BROUILLARD canada - french - films rené malo	3/25	5	1/1	5,806	1/1	4,019	1/1	3,054	1/1	3,639	23,817
MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD usa - english - paramount	4/1	4	6/10	56,950	6/11	35,626	4/4	12,350	2/4	10,558	115,484
MAX DUGAN RETURNS usa - english - 20th century fox	3/25	5	6/16	140,396	6/16	87,951	6/16	76,133	6/19	73,596	547,192
MEURTRE A DOMICILE france - french - vivafilms	4/22	1	-/-	-	-/-	-	-/-	-	1/1	5,228	5,228
MONTY PYTHON'S THE MEANING OF LIFE united kingdom - english - universal	4/1	4	6/17	288,221	6/18	216,027	6/19	172,506	6/15	135,250	812,004
NU DE FEMME italy - french - vivafilms	4/8	3	-/-	-	1/1	7,800	1/1	7,086	1/1	5,559	20,445
THE OUTSIDERS usa - english - warner brothers	3/25	5	5/19	310,579	6/21	221,079	6/22	166,941	6/25	140,392	1,220,885
LE RETOUR DE MARTIN GUERRE france - french - films mutuels	2/4	12	1/1	12,186	1/1	9,254	1/1	9,059	1/1	7,225	185,364
SOPHIE'S CHOICE usa - english - universal	12/10	20	6/8	60,918	6/9	68,882	6/11	85,616	6/12	77,050	1,357,102
SPRING BREAK usa - english - columbia	3/25	5	6/25	215,776	6/24	117,359	5/18	69,118	5/8	28,345	722,709
TOOTSIE usa - english & french - columbia	12/17	19	6/33	329,422	6/33	273,469	6/32	245,558	6/30	223,331	7,505,966
TOUGH ENOUGH usa - english - 20th century fox	3/25	5	5/11	59,667	5/8	27,191	3/4	9,375	2/2	3,701	155,119
THE VERDICT usa - eng. & fr. - 20th century fox	12/17	19	5/11	60,667	6/16	64,010	6/11	41,663	5/9	34,020	3,011,125
WE OF THE NEVER, NEVER usa - english - triumph	3/18	6	2/2	15,877	2/2	12,117	3/3	16,315	3/3	12,674	78,381
THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY australia - english - united artists	2/18	10	6/9	45,447	6/10	33,144	5/5	16,643	5/10	20,631	627,883

The figures in the NATIONAL OVERVIEW are the box-office grosses, compiled from individual theatres of the four major chains in Canada (Famous Players, Odeon Theatres, Landmark and Cineplex) in the six major Canadian cities: Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmon-

ton, Calgary and Vancouver. Figures are given separately for each week in the time-framed covered, and the accumulated gross is given from the date of release to the last week in the current chart. CURRENT GROSSES are given, when available, on Canadian films (or others if

not presented in one of the four major chains). Slots marked -/- indicate the film did not play during that week.

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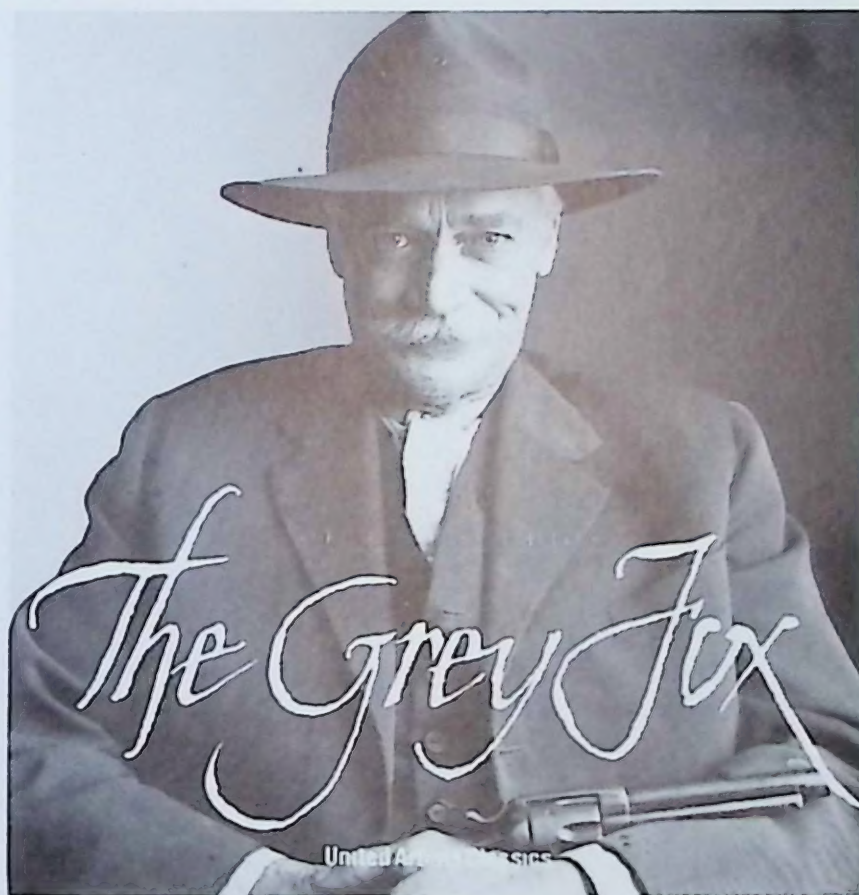
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